Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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SABBATH STAR SHOWS QUIETER SIDE IN SONG FOR CATHEDRAL

Completely different – Tony Iommi at the cathedral

THE man who invented heavy metal returned home to give an altogether more soothing musical gift back to the city which shaped him.

Black Sabbath lead guitarist Tony Iommi, who is nearing the end of the band's final tour, wrote a moving acoustic arrangement for Birmingham Cathedral which was given its first airing on Thursday.

Working with his friend the Dean of Birmingham, the Very Rev Catherine Ogle, on a five-minute arrangement called 'How Good It Is' gave him a chance to 'give something to the city', the 68-year-old star said.

The song celebrates peace, harmony and the cathedral's role in the heart of the city. It features Iommi on acoustic guitar, with lyrics inspired by Psalm 133 performed by men and boys from the cathedral choir.

Tony said: "It's great to be involved with the cathedral and doing something for it. When Catherine mentioned it, it felt like a nice thing to do, to be able to give something to the city.

"It's completely different from any of the heavier stuff. This is a completely new piece of music, and I'm really pleased with it."

The guitarist was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2012. He has since recovered and even released a new album with Black Sabbath, titled 13, in 2013.

Dean Ogle, who will soon be leaving Birmingham to become Dean at Winchester Cathedral, said: "Tony and I were introduced by a mutual friend, and we discussed a possible music collaboration sometime in the future.

"Then, when Tony was unwell, we got to know one another better when I began to pray for him and kept in touch with Tony and his wife about his health.

"This is a most wonderful gift Tony offered to the cathedral."

Tony took the opportunity to again address rumours about Sabbath's flirtations with Satanism ahead of the first play of 'How Good It Is': "People used to think we were Satanists but we weren't. The songs were the opposite and all about the dangers of black magic and Satanism. The closest we came was Black Magic chocolates."

Pupils 'open to risk of radicalisation' says Ofsted

SCHOOL RATED 'INADEQUATE'

A PRIMARY school in Oldbury has been put into special measures, with weak leadership and poor teaching highlighted by the education watchdog.

Rounds Green Primary has been rated 'inadequate' in all areas, and Ofsted inspectors said the school is leaving pupils open to the risk of 'radicalisation and exploitation'. The school in Brades Road has 461 pupils on its roll, aged three to 11. It was inspected on November 9 and 10.

BY LUCY THOMPSON

The Ofsted report said: "It is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

"Pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet or mobiles. They are not taught how to identify the risk or dangers of child exploitation and radicalisation."

Advised

Inspectors found that attendance among staff and pupils is poor, and incidents involving bullying are not managed well enough. Inspectors said pupils are underachieving, with teachers unclear about specific skills that need to be developed.

The school has also had 'significant changes of staff' with eight teachers leaving last year and five classes currently being taught by supply teachers.

An interim headteacher has been in the post since September, and inspectors have advised that newly qualified teachers should not be appointed. The report states that the interim headteacher has quickly and accurately identified the existing weaknesses, begun to taken effective action and has been called 'inspirational' by fellow staff.

Ofsted inspectors also said pupils were polite and well-mannered during the inspection, and the sports premium funding has been used effectively, helping pupils to develop healthy lifestyles.

Linda Deeley, interim headteacher and chair of governors, said: "We are obviously disappointed in the report's findings.

"However, the report clearly recognises that the school had already identified the appropriate school improvement priorities required and are taking the necessary remedial steps. We are certain that with the continued support of governors, staff, local authority, parents and wider school community, we will rapidly make the changes identified."

Poppy memorial to honour veterans

A unique memorial made by pupils to honour war heroes was unveiled by the mayor of Sandwell. Dozens of students at Devonshire Junior School, in Smethwick, designed the impressive poppy plaque. Councillor Julie Webb spent time with the children before the unveiling. It shows how local people have been affected by the Second World War. The mayor was joined for a photograph by Nobby Clarke, from the Oldbury branch of the Royal British Legion, along with youngsters Haris Mohammed and Amani Powell, both 11.

PLANNING

Eyesore pub could make way for flats

A DERELICT pub in Oldbury could finally be knocked down after a new plan to build homes on the site was revealed.

The former Perrott Arms has been subject to several development bids since closing around 15 years ago.

It has since run into disrepair and been labelled an eyesore, leading to calls for action.

Now an application to build 22 flats on the site has been lodged with council bosses.

The building stands at the junction of Birmingham Road and Flash Road, opposite the former Sandwell Magistrates Court.

A decision on the application is expected in the coming months.

PORTRAITS

Photo exhibition is a first for Liz

HOME Made in Smethwick, a free admission exhibition of photographs by local photographer Liz Hingley, is to tour six Sandwell libraries.

She has worked with residents for two years to create an 'intimate photographic portrait of the people and the food cooked in Smethwick'.

A book of the work was published in August last year, but this is the first exhibition of the photographs. The launch event is at 2.30 pm on Monday, January 16, in Smethwick Library.

INJUNCTIONS

Council gets tough on traveller camps

TOUGH new powers have been drawn up in a bid to force illegal traveller camps in Sandwell to move on within 24 hours.

The borough has been blighted by a 25 per cent rise in camps in the last 18 months, and council bosses hope using injunctions similar to those used in Walsall will help ease the problem.

A scheme being discussed by Sandwell Council's cabinet this week is designed to resolve issues such as noise, fly-tipping and site damage more efficiently.

The council has estimated that dealing with illegal camps costs about a quarter of a million pounds each year.

INSIDE

SUSAN LEAVES IN SOME STYLE

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Jayne LaHiffe
Tel: 01543 465344
E-mail: jayne.lahiffe@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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New Year honour for school head

Gordon Phillips MBE

A RECENTLY retired Sandwell special school principal has been named in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

Gordon Phillips, who retired last summer after 10 years as principal at The Meadows Sports College in Oldbury, was made an MBE (Member of the most excellent Order of the British Empire).

Gordon, a father-of-two, started teaching in 1975 at the school he attended in Plymouth, Bishop Vaughan RC School. He worked in schools around the country until taking up his eleventh and last position as principal at The Meadows Sports College in 2006. During his time at The Meadows, Gordon raised more than £14,000 for school funds in sponsored 10km runs and made huge improvements to the learning environment including the nature trail.

As a mark of his popularity, 22 letters of recommendation for Gordon were sent to the Honours Committee from The Meadows & previous schools, Plymouth Sea Anglers' Club, The Youth Hostel Association and parents.

Gordon said: "I was over the moon when I found out I had been nominated for the award and by so many colleagues and former colleagues. "I loved my time at The Meadows, it was a wonderful school to end my career at thanks to the brilliant dedicated staff there.

"This award is as much theirs as mine because a great team makes a great school and that's what I was lucky to have – a truly outstanding and loyal team around me."

Sandwell Councillor Simon Hackett, for children's services, said: "Gordon was an inspiring school principal who influenced the lives of thousands of children. He has dedicated his working life to educating children and young people and this is very well-deserved award."

First bid on way for Manor revamp cash

A £2.5 million restoration of West Bromwich's historic Manor House has moved a step closer with the opening bid for funding about to be submitted.

It is hoped the project to bring the 700-year-old building back to its former glory will begin before the end of the year.

Bosses are also aiming to boost visitor numbers by adding a range of attractions and involving virtual reality. Council chiefs are confident the restoration will be able to go-ahead as discussions with the Heritage Lottery suggested it would be willing to provide the £2 million needed.

Sandwell Council will put up the other half a million pounds. Access will be improved to allow more people to get upstairs to parts of the building which are rarely seen. Temporary repairs will be fixed properly and 'unsympathetic' extensions will be removed.

Projectors

While there will be a focus on celebrating the building's past, it will also be taken into the future with the addition of virtual reality, which would involve having images displayed onto walls through 4D projectors.

The first bid for funding will see an application for £142,000 submitted to Heritage Lottery in the coming weeks.

Bosses will then use the cash to further their case for receiving the full amount. The scheme is expected to be complete by 2020.

The building was originally built by Richard de Marnham in the 1270s but in more recent times it has had several uses including a pub and restaurant until 2009.

It is now probably one of the most important surviving medieval timber-framed buildings in the Midlands and the most recent building to become part of Sandwell Museum Service.

The construction of its great hall is thought to be the earliest of this type of construction in the country in a standing building.

It opened as a visitor attraction run by Sandwell Council's museum service in 2010. Council leader Steve Eling said: "It is the oldest building in the borough and it has real historic significance."

Rhianna on song with safety advice

Rhianna Emms with Sharon Shakoane, Ricardo Brown and Danielle Roche

STUDENTS at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath have been paid a visit by pop star Rhianna Emms as part of a tour to deliver online safety and anti-discrimination messages to young people.

Rhianna is a 21-year-old urban and pop singer-songwriter from the Midlands. She writes all her own music and has been described by Radio 1 as the next big female singer on the music scene. She has also supported Fifth Harmony on tour.

During the afternoon in Cradley Heath, Rhianna performed and talked to Forge students in years 7, 8 and 9.

As well as delivering important messages about online safety and some personal reflections on bullying and discrimination, Rhianna performed a set of covers that had the 1,000 strong audience of students up on their feet.

Rhianna said: "The kids were absolutely amazing, they all gave it their all when singing along to my songs. They had no problem answering my questions in relation to cyber bullying."

Principal at Forge, Andrew Burns, said: "The messages she delivered are incredibly important, they are messages we constantly reinforce but having Rhianna engage with the young people so well makes the delivery more powerful."

The Academy is welcoming rising pop and R&B duo, Misunderstood, in January to perform and talk to students about British values.

Council may score with £6m football funding bid

FOOTBALL pitches could be created at two sites in Sandwell after council bosses revealed a plan to bid for millions of pounds of sports funding.

Sandwell Council wants to build 'football hubs' equipped with high-grade facilities in the north and south of the borough. The Parklife Football Hub programme, backed by Sport England, the Football Association and Premier League, aims to boost sport participation and improve facilities at grassroots level.

The cash-strapped authority would be able to apply for up to £6 million in funding for the hubs, which would include at least two 3G pitches and changing rooms.

Damaged

Locations for the pitches have not yet been decided but it is planned for one to serve Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich and the other for Oldbury, Smethwick and Rowley Regis.

The move would involve the formation of a new trust which would eventually see maintenance of sports pitches taken out of the council's hands.

The availability of top-level artificial pitches would also mean less money having to be spent on grass pitches which get damaged during the winter. Bosses have lodged an expression of interest, with the aim of completing the pitches in the next three years.

Sandwell Council would have to contribute 40 per cent of the cost of building the hubs – up to £2.4m.

Teenager faces burglary charge

A TEENAGER has appeared in court charged with the theft of £60,000 of motorcycles.

Mark Selwood, 18, of Batman's Hill Road, Tipton is charged with burglary, taking a vehicle without consent and criminal damage in connection with the theft of 12 motorcycles.

The motorcycles were taken from Freestyle Bikes on St Giles Business Park in Newtown overnight on January 1 when two sections of wall were knocked through.

Selwood, who appeared at Wrexham Magistrates' Court, entered no pleas to the charges and was remanded in custody.

He will appear at Mold Crown Court on February 3.

Mayor candidates to meet pensioners

WEST Midlands Pensioners' Convention is holding a hustings for West Midlands mayor candidates next month.

The event on February 21 is at West Bromwich Central Library, from 11am-1pm. All pensioners are welcome but spaces are limited.

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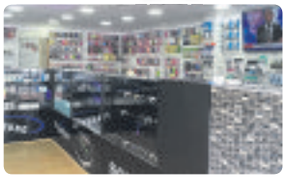

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Driver who killed teen in car gets six years

A DRIVER who killed an 18-year-old woman in a horrific road crash after hitting speeds of up to 100mph has been jailed for six years.

Polish immigrant Kuba Oles was travelling so fast when his Audi A6 hurtled into Georgie Evans' Ford Fiesta that her car was torn in half, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Georgie Evans

Jail – Kuba Oles

Witnesses estimated he had been travelling at up to 100mph in a 30 limit when tragedy struck moments after two other drivers remarked he was 'going to kill somebody', revealed Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting.

The court was told the crash happened less than a month after Oles was reported to police for dangerous driving.

The Audi had narrowly missed a bus and 'fish tailed' as the 24-year-old driver momentarily lost control on a roundabout before accelerating in Priory Road, Dudley, on October 27.

Oles was helped to the side of the road by passers-by but fled from the scene when their backs were turned. He did not hand himself into the police until 18 hours later, making it impossible for him to be checked for drink and drugs.

Oles, from Beaconview Road, West Bromwich, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving, leaving the scene and failing to report an accident. He also admitted the earlier incident of dangerous driving. He was jailed for six years with an extended four year licence period on release and banned from driving for 14 years.

Homes vow after funding bid fails

COUNCIL chiefs have pledged their support to major building projects after the Black Country Garden City scheme failed to secure Government funding.

The project to build 45,000 homes across the Black Country, was not included in the funding announcement for such schemes by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) last week.

Among more than 31 different sites identified for development as part of the garden city proposals, were those in Lye and Dudley Port.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise for Dudley Council, said: "Dudley Council as part of the Black Country remains committed to an ambitious growth plan."

School expansion making progress

The building off Sedgley Road East

A PROJECT to expand a school allowing hundreds more pupils to be taken on next year has taken a major step forward.

The new premises of Sacred Heart Primary, which is being built off Sedgley Road East in Tipton, now has walls and roofing in place as developers finished the latest stage in the development.

The school is expanding to take on around 300 more pupils next school year.

Ward councillors said the move to expand the school was 'great' as there were not enough school places for children in the town.

Tipton Green Ward Councillor Ian Jones said: "The opening of the school will be great for the area as there is a shortage of school places in Tipton. This will help with the numbers of children getting into schools."

The outer shell of the new building has now been constructed as developers push forward with the project. Work will be taking place to develop the exterior and interior of the building.

The new premises will offer space for 420 children and would employ 53 full-time staff with a further four on a part-time basis. In October 2015 112 pupils aged three-to-11 attended the Pupils are currently being taught at the school's existing site in Victoria Road. It was built in the 1920s and has been deemed no longer fit for purpose by council chiefs.

Councillor Jones said some pupils were being taught in the Grade II listed Carnegie Building opposite the existing school building, as extra students had already been taken on as part of the expansion.

High Street businesses hit by fires hours apart

FIFTY firefighters battled a huge fire at a Caribbean restaurant in West Bromwich, hours after an arson attack at a pizza shop nearby.

High Street was closed for hours by the blaze which tore through the first and second floors of Royale Garden Restaurant.

The incident came after arsonists targeted No 1 Pizza takeaway, a few minutes' walk away.

It is believed that the blaze was started by thieves who broke into the takeaway and grabbed cash from the till.

Fire crews were called to the incident at 7.37am last Wednesday, leaving shortly after 10am, but returned just over an hour later to the scene of the nearby restaurant fire, which was discovered by the owner Mercy Igunbor on opening.

She said: "I have no idea how it would have started, there was nobody in there at the time.

"I opened up and then I saw the fire. I told my husband to put the shutters back down and call the fire bridge for help.

"It is a devastating day for me, we have been here for three years as of last month."

Crews from West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Smethwick, Tipton and Aston attended.

Control

Police were also called, along with West Midlands Ambulance Service.

The road was cordoned off either side of the Caribbean restaurant, with fire crews tackling the blaze at the front and back of the premises.

Paramedics remained on standby but no-one was reported injured.

Aftab Ahmed, from Aafee Barbers, two doors away from the restaurant, said: "I was in my shop when it broke out and came out to see all of the police and fire crews. The fire service have done really well to keep it under control because there are a lot of shops here if it spread."

The two fires came eight days after a man, Carl Campbell, was killed in a shooting just off High Street, in Dartmouth Street.

A man living close to the fire, who did not want to be named, said: "It is all happening in West Bromwich at the minute, you are always hearing of trouble, shootings and robberies, now we have had these two fires. It is quite worrying."

Forensics officers examined the pizza shop after emergency crews left the scene. The fire left severe smoke damage inside. A police spokesman said: "The incident is being treated as arson."

Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101 quoting crime number 20SW/2150A/17.

Police are investigating after arsonists targeted No 1 Pizza in High Street, West Bromwich

Smoke from the second fire Picture: Roger Blake

The Royale Garden Restaurant fire Picture: WMFS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Student 'takeover' at iconic city store

TALENTED fashion business and promotion students from Birmingham City University have 'taken over' Selfridges Birmingham for a term as they learn about retail design.

They were given the unique opportunity to work with the creative and management team at the iconic Birmingham store to complete their module on visual merchandising and retail design.

The module over the autumn semester has been based on Selfridges' theme 'Material World', which will now be going live at the store.

Speedy advice on choosing careers

A CAREERS speed-networking event will be held for pupils at Q3 Academy in Great Barr on March 27.

The Q3 Academies Trust, in partnership with Black Country Chamber of Commerce, is organising the event.

Employers are being sought to donate half a day of their time to talk to young people about working in their particular industry.

Dr Caroline Badyal, chief executive of the Q3 Academies Trust, said: "We are really looking forward to working with the Black Country Chamber on this event."

Bad Touch about to rock Brum O2

YOUNG rockers Bad Touch are to perform at Birmingham's O2 Academy as part of the Planet Rock Roadstars UK tour.

Original guitarist Rob Glendenning has stood down, and he will be replaced by 20-year-old Harry Slater.

They will be joined by Birmingham outfit Broken Witt Rebels for the concert on April 8.

Tickets are available from the 24-hour box office on 0844 478 0898 or online at www.bit.ly/1u8gw0w

Inquest opens on man found dead in garden

AN inquest has opened on a man found hanged in a garden in Oldbury.

Nathan Young, aged 37, from Winson Green, was due to enter a mental health unit for treatment but 'ran away', Black Country Coroners Court heard.

He made his way to his brother's home in Broadway, Oldbury, and refused to go back, going missing again that evening.

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique adjourned the inquest to March 2.

New homes on the way

A MIDLAND housing partnership is to build hundreds of homes at a cost of almost £100 million across the region. Led by the Accord Group, the Matrix Housing Partnership will build 664 homes in Birmingham, the Black Country, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire. Work starts in 2018.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

YES, there is a lot of it about. Sniffles, cough, headache and, just when you think you've shaken it off, it comes back again. I couldn't help noticing at a party recently how some of the cheeks one kissed were burning hot. As this winter's dreaded lurgy continues, I foresee a return of Hollywood-style contactless air-kissing. Mwah, mwah, darlings.

WALKING down the street into an oncoming stream of shoppers (including me), a man wearing earphones was holding his laptop in front of him at eye-level and conducting a Skype conversation with somebody, at full volume. This incident proved that communal wishing does not work. Everyone in that street was thinking: "Go on, you idiot, walk into a lamppost," but the Skype merchant missed them all.

AT least the old 19th century houses were easy to take down. I spent one summer as a labourer on the demolition of a huge Regency villa. There was no need to use a demolition ball, nor even a hammer or chisel. We simply lifted every brick by hand. There was no adhesive power in the powdery old mortar and the only thing holding each course of bricks in place was the weight of the bricks above. A bricklayer told me the old buildings remained standing only because all the woodworms were holding hands.

TV dramas are filmed months before they are screened. So the makers of Halcyon (ITV) must have watched in horror a few weeks ago as Close to the Enemy (BBC1) was broadcast.

Note the startling similarities between the two offerings. Same setting, in a 1940s hotel. Same atmosphere of conspiracy about the reasons for the Second World War. Same jazz band with sexy chanteuse. And to cap it all, both dramas had the actress Charity Wakefield playing a blonde femme fatale. Both series were about spies. So who's been spying on whom . . ?

AS a fully paid-up guardian of Joe Public against the monstrous forces of government, I should be outraged at the news of new powers allowing Whitehall departments to share individuals' details with local councils. I find myself strangely unoutraged. If Mr J Public is pleading poverty to the town hall to get benefits but HMRC knows he is a millionaire, the sooner the taxman has a word with the town clerk, the better. In any case, didn't we all assume they were sharing information already?

I SAW this scrawled on a wall this week: "Carrie is a grass." Don't you find it strangely reassuring that in the age of cyber-crime and DNA profiling, our criminal-justice system still has a place for the good old-fashioned copper's nark?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Airport is the world's most punctual

BIRMINGHAM Airport has been named the world's most punctual airport in 2016 by air travel intelligence company OAG, with 91.28 per cent of arriving and departing flights operating on time.

With more than 100,000 scheduled flights from Birmingham Airport last year, the most punctual route was to Dublin, boasting an on-time score of over 95 per cent. The UK airport beat contenders from countries such as Japan, Brazil, America, Germany and Australia to claim the global crown.

On receiving the award, Birmingham Airport's chief executive, Paul Kehoe, said, "To be crowned the world's most punctual airport in 2016 is a tremendous prize, particularly in the busiest 12 months in our 77-year history. This achievement is a result of a team effort by the 7,000 employees and 140 companies operating at the airport – from the ground handlers to bus drivers, fuellers to caterers, and cleaners to office staff. We have invested £350m in the last 10 years to improve the airport infrastructure and we're currently working on a further one million pound development project to improve passenger facilities even further. These investments have helped us achieve this award because we can offer our customers an efficient service.

"The success of Birmingham is just another example of how the UK's regional airports have created world-class facilities and networks that both connect their regional communities to the world, and provide valuable economic growth."

Opening times signs of confusion for tip users

By Marion Brennan

A CONFUSING sign at a busy recycling tip – causing people to turn up on the wrong day – is costing ratepayers thousands of pounds, a council chief claims.

Two information boards on either side of the entrance to Aldridge recycling depot in Walsall read: 'This site is closed every Wednesday & Tuesday' in large letters.

But because of the back-to-front order of the sign, many people read it as Wednesday and Thursday and turn up on a day it is closed – leading some visitors to dump their rubbish illegally in frustration instead of returning to the depot on another day, said Councillor Mike Bird, Conservative leader of Walsall Council.

"Some people may think the sign is funny but actually it has serious consequences. Fly-tipping costs the council hundreds of thousands of pounds a year and this sign is contributing to those rising costs," said Councillor Bird.

"If it's not pointed out to you, or you're not concentrating, people read 'Tuesday' as 'Thursday', it's an easy thing to do. I've read it like that and other people have raised it with me also.

Temptation

"The problem is if people turn up with a car load of rubbish to recycle and the site is closed, they may very well dump it elsewhere. If you've got your car full, it's going to be very hard to go home, unload it all, and load up again another day. The temptation to fly-tip is great."

Fly-tipping has blighted the borough in recent years. Latest figures show the problem cost the council up to £28,000 a month last year. This year's bill is expected to top £120,000.

It is feared an unpopular move to scrap weekly collections in favour of fortnightly pick-ups in order to save £1 million will only add to the problem. With around 2,000 people having their applications for bigger bins rejected, many are predicting a further rise in fly-tipping.

A report earlier this year revealed the worst hit spots for fly-tipping in the borough. They included Slacky Lane, Spout Lane, Winterley Lane and Bull Lane, Moxley. In August it emerged that cameras designed to catch offenders in Darlaston had not been working for six weeks.

Another sign near the facility which outlines all the days of the week the recycling centre is actually open

A visitor to Aldridge tip seen near the two signs at the entrance which say it is closed on Wednesday and Tuesday

Busiest day recorded in ambulance trust history

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service rang in 2017 with the busiest day ever for the Trust.

Throughout January 1, WMAS received no fewer than 4,629 emergency calls, 807 more than the previous most busy day, New Year's Day 2011.

It rounded off an incredibly busy festive period for the Trust. From December 29, to January 2, the service took 18,583 calls compared to 15,933 for the same period in 2015-16, equal to a 16.6 per cent rise in call numbers for the five days.

While the evening of New Year's Eve and the early hours of New Year's Day were filled with alcohol-related calls including assaults, falls and unconscious patients, the majority of calls during the five days were for people who were unwell with the likes of breathing difficulties, chest pains and falls.

Trust chief executive Anthony Marsh, said: "I am very grateful and proud of all the staff and volunteers that worked through this period. While the majority of people were enjoying time with family and friends, my staff were working 24 hours a day to keep the public of the West Midlands safe.

"Over the years we have developed incredibly detailed plans and made preparations for this incredibly busy period.

"Once again, that planning has paid off and we have met this challenge and continued to provide a very high standard of service to patients."

Inmate charged with jail mutiny

A PRISON inmate from Oldbury appeared in court charged with taking part in last month's disorder at HMP Birmingham.

Robert Smith, aged 33, appeared at Birmingham Magistrates Court charged with prison mutiny on Saturday. Last week Ross Queen, 30, of Northfield, appeared at Birmingham Magistrates Court charged with two charges of prison mutiny and one of taking a photograph without authorisation after allegedly posing in a riot helmet for a picture alongside another prisoner.

They will both appear next at Birmingham Crown Court on February 3. West Midlands Police said its officers are continuing to work with the Prison Service and G4S in investigating the disorder on December 16.

Resurfacing work closes busy road

A busy road in Smethwick will be closed across three Sundays while resurfacing work is carried out. Tollhouse Way will be shut between 7.30am to 3.30pm by Telford Way. Diversions for motorists will be signposted.

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Magistrates court move has resulted in chaos: MP

A BLACK Country MP has claimed the closure of a magistrates court has 'caused chaos'.

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson has now written to Justice Secretary Liz Truss to demand that the Ministry of Justice reviews the provision of court facilities in Sandwell.

Sandwell Magistrates closed in September, leaving the borough as the only one in the Black Country without a court of its type. Judicial cases from Sandwell have been transferred to other regional courts, including Wolverhampton, which has come in for heavy criticism from Mr Watson – the Labour Party's deputy leader.

Mr Watson said: "The Government's decision to close Sandwell has caused chaos. Many cases have been transferred to Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court and the facilities there cannot cope with the increased demand – there's a real crisis.

"There's been a general over listing of Sandwell cases and lengthy waits for hearings, with cases adjourned due to a lack of court time. On at least two occasions, when a case has been listed for 10am, it's not been dealt with until after 4pm, meaning that the police and the public have waited around all day," he said.

Mr Watson added: "The closure of Sandwell was wrong and poorly thought out."

An HM Courts and Tribunal Service spokesman said: "Closing underused and dilapidated court buildings will allow us to reinvest in the justice system."

Pitching in to kit out players

A FISH shop owner has chipped in to help a junior football side become noticed on the pitch.

Hill Top Rangers were forced to play in bibs because of regular kit clashes with their opponents. Manager Stephen Broadstock approached Stan Menicou, owner of the Victoria Chippy, Owen Street, Tipton, who agreed to sponsor the team and supply new strips.

Rangers are unbeaten this season and top of their league.

Stephen said: "Like everyone in the local area we are struggling for funds, and really did not want to be playing in bibs."

Previous manager John Williams is the father of Newport County player Aaron, who started out at Walsall.

Give us unwanted toys, says charity

PARENTS having a post-Christmas clearout of toys are urged to donate them to the sight loss charity, the Beacon Centre. They can be dropped off at any of its seven shops across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Travelodge takes shape in town centre

The Travelodge under construction

THIS picture shows how the construction of a new town centre hotel is starting to take shape.

The 78-bed Travelodge in West Bromwich is the latest step in the revamp of Providence Place, next to the new West Bromwich Building Society base.

Hotel bosses have said the project will create more than 100 jobs.

When the scheme was granted planning permission earlier this year, Andy Elwell, of Hinton Group, said: "Development of the 78-bed hotel at Providence Place will not only look to be a welcome addition to the regeneration of West Bromwich town centre but also a convenient hub in its prime location with direct access to the M6/M5 links and Birmingham city centre."

West Bromwich town centre has undergone a major overhaul in recent years, with the opening of the New Square Shopping Centre and Tesco, as well as hundreds of homes.

According to developers Hinton Group, the Travelodge will create 25 full and part-time jobs after it is built with more than 80 jobs created during the construction phase.

West Bromwich Building Society has also recently moved in to its new headquarters in Providence Place.

The 70,00 sq ft five-storey building, next to the BT regional business centre off the A41 island, is home to nearly 400 workers at the Black Country's biggest building society.

Motorists' M5 misery as slip roads to close

DRIVERS will be forced to take long detours as slip roads on the M5 will be closed overnight for more than three months at the Birchley Island in Oldbury.

After 9pm, traffic will not be able to get on or off the motorway at the busy roundabout – which leads onto Junction 2 – until May once the closures come into force.

Both the northbound and southbound sides will be affected.

It means people needing to get onto the M5 during the night will have head to either West Bromwich or Halesowen. Those coming off will also need to do so at either Junction 1 for West Brom or Junction 3 for Halesowen.

Lorry drivers and other night traffic could face regular disruption.

The closures have been announced by Highways England which will be carrying out major repairs on the slip roads, including resurfacing and waterproofing.

Streetlight works and other carriageway repairs are also planned.

The first night closure will be on January 16 and will continue until April 30. Slip roads will re-open at 6am each day.

Potential

Albion are not due to play any night matches at The Hawthorns during the period, but the works have the potential to clash with any FA Cup replays they might be involved in.

Oldbury councillor Suzanne Hartwell urged drivers to be patient during the works.

She said: "Whatever they do there is going to be disruption.

"But if they need to do roadworks it is the best time to do it. It's better than nine in the morning.

"It will cause disruption but I would ask drivers to be patient and be cautious on the roads while this is going on."

It is the latest motorway works to hit the region, following a six-month project on the M6 at Great Barr. It is also the precursor to a much larger project on the M5, which could last up to two years.

Maintenance work will be carried out on the 3km-long Oldbury Viaduct and will see the existing waterproofing system, last renewed 30 years ago, replaced.

Traffic management has yet to be finalised but it could result in lanes being narrowed and the speed limit being reduced.

Hair's to Susan's happy retirement

Family and friends wish Susan Jones well she retires from hairdressing after 50 years

A HAIRDRESSER has hung up her scissors after more than five decades.

It's been 53 years since Susan Jones started out with a Saturday job in a salon aged 12. Two years later she became a full-time hairdresser. She has now finally cut off all ties with the profession.

The 65-year-old began working in a hairdressers in West Bromwich before later buying the shop, now known as Susan's Hairdressers, on High Street, at the age of 22. She has been cutting some of her existing customers' hair since the age of 15 with most of her devoted customers being elderly – including one woman who is 104.

It all started after Mrs Jones went to have her hair permed on her birthday at Jeanette's Hairdressers in Hateley Heath, where she was asked to work a Saturday shift. She now plans to do more voluntary work. Susan said: "It's been an amazing journey but I thought that its now an ideal time to retire after putting it off.

"I've enjoyed every last bit of it, especially all the charity work which we've previously done for the Beacon Centre for the Blind and Breast Cancer Awareness.

"Some of my customers have been coming to me for 50 years so when I told them of my retirement a lot of them were very upset. Looking back, it's been amazing."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Appeal launched to find pensioner

POLICE have launched an urgent appeal to find a pensioner who has gone missing. Frank O'Brien went missing from his residential care home in Edgbaston during Christmas week and officers are concerned for his well-being.

Mr O'Brien

Mr O'Brien, aged 77, is described as 5ft 6ins tall with grey eyes and grey hair. He has dementia and is likely to be in a very confused state. Insp Chris Gittins said: "We would ask anyone who sees him to make immediate contact with us so we know he is safe and well." Call officers on 101 ext 822 3116.

Arson probe after fire lit in letterbox

AN arson investigation is under way after a fire was started in a letterbox at an Oldbury home. A cat and dog had to be rescued from the blaze on New England Close.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire Service said: "We received a 999 call at 9.02pm on Wednesday to a property on New England Close in Oldbury. We sent two crews from Oldbury with six firefighters in total."

A West Midlands Police spokesman said police were investigating and anyone with information should call 101.

Develop skills in leadership

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce has announced the return of a successful leadership programme.

The Strategic Leadership Programme is an exclusive initiative to develop the leadership and management skills of senior business people across the board. This course is aimed at supporting business growth and inspiring leaders throughout the region. Visit www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk/bcc-events

Major road closed overnight for repairs

TRAFFIC disruption is due this week on the Black Country New Road in Tipton, for essential repairs.

Sandwell Highways has revealed work is needed to repair joints on the viaduct. There will be overnight lane closures on the major route between 8pm and 6am, every day until Friday.

A spokesman said: "This is part of rolling roadworks that had been planned by our highways team."

Classic tale staged

CINDERELLA will be coming to the stage in Birmingham in February.

The classic tale will be re-told at the Birmingham Hippodrome, in Hurst Street. It will run between February 15 and 25. Tickets are on sale from birming hamhippodrome.com

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Question is whether patients are cared for

AT least two people a day are dying of thirst or starvation in hospitals, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics. Malnutrition was mentioned on the death certificates of 297 patients who died in hospital during 2015, while dehydration was cited on 429.

Now every case is different, and it would be naive to lay all of the blame on the NHS. But the sheer numbers do suggest something is amiss. Money is always an issue, but really, how much does it cost to check if somebody has been eating their food?

During my visits to hospitals I have been touched by the kindness of nursing staff towards patients who can sometimes be challenging. But I have also seen time and resources wasted on questions which have very little to do with the ailments in question, and everything to do with politically correct box ticking.

The staff are simply following instructions. But maybe their bosses, both in the NHS and government, might care to focus on the basics, and leave the lifestyle surveys to others?

❒❒❒

MEANWHILE, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust has really got to the heart the issues facing our overstretched hospitals by spending £1,265 on 100 "gender neutral" toilets.

Now I've no idea what a "gender neutral toilet" is, but I imagine it is not too different from those, boring old-fashioned "gender specific" ones. You know, a cistern, a seat, and a chain.

The main difference, as far as I can see, is that the gender neutral ones have a rather confusing sign featuring four figures: one male, one female, one in a wheelchair, and one which can only be described as resembling somebody in a Bernie Clifton ostrich suit. Which is great when the panto cast drops in for a visit, but a waste of time for the rest of the year.

Last year Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust announced plans to get rid of 450 staff. Nice to know they have got their priorities right.

❒❒❒

LAST week marked 50 years since the death of Donald Campbell while attempting to set an unsurpassable water-speed record on Lake Coniston.

Campbell, along with his father Sir Malcolm and Captain George Eyston, was part of a golden age of British adventurers who put their lives on the line pushing the boundaries of technology and human endeavour. Eyston, driving a car called Thunderbolt built atTipton's Bean foundry, broke the land speed record three times, ultimately reaching 357.5 mph in 1938.

Today, the Bean has been replaced by houses. Swashbuckling eccentrics like Campbell and Eyston have made way for millionaire playboys Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton.

An example of the parking problem at Glebefields School

A man is forced to push a pram in the road due to the cars

A parent squeezes past cars parked on the pavement

'Ticking timebomb' of school parking issue

JAMIE BRASSINGTON looks at the issue of parking outside a school in Tipton which is causing problems for residents

A CAMPAIGN has been launched to install safety measures outside a primary school, which has been labelled an 'accident waiting to happen' by a ward councillor.

Parking is such an issue at Glebefields Primary in Tipton, that 'it is a wonder no-one has been hurt', according to Princes End Councillor Philip Garrett.

Parent James Marsh

Resident Jodie Lowe

He has campaigned with the school and parents to get Sandwell Council to install double yellow lines and a small car park to ease the problem on Sandgate Road.

Councillor Garrett said: "Everybody knows how bad the parking is down Sandgate Road, how a kid hasn't got hurt down there I don't know. It is a ticking timebomb and an accident waiting to happen.

"Parents, the school and myself set up a petition calling for the measures, which reached more than 100 signatures and was handed into Sandwell Council's cabinet.

"Sandwell Council's Highways Department came down and agreed to the measures, but no work has started yet."

Councillor Garrett and parents described how the road becomes a 'danger' to children during busy periods, when parents drop off and collect their children from school.

Councillor Phillip Garrett next to a sign at the Tipton school trying to inform parents

Residents living close to the school say their lives are being affected because vehicles block off their drives.

Some measures are already in place to prevent parking close to the school.

A sign reading 'don't park here' has been hung outside the school gates, while a small section of Sandgate Road has double yellow lines to prevent people from parking on the pavement.

Funnelled

The proposed measures would see double yellow lines extended further down the street, while a car park would be built on vacant land located off Sandgate Road.

"The road becomes like a choke point when it gets busy. It becomes funnelled and the footpaths get smaller when cars park on the pavements," said Councillor Garrett. "It can be absolutely treacherous at this time of year, and an imminent danger to children."

Parents described the worst time was as being the end of the school day – when both the nursery and primary school finish at the same time.

Parent James Marsh, aged 36 from Tipton, said: "It is extremely dangerous on the road during busy periods, There have been two or three near misses with children here.

"The council have been approached about the situation and are meant to have put double yellow lines along the road but nothing has happened yet."

Grandmother Sharon Leith added: "The parking problem poses a danger to children. Half of the people who drop their kids off in cars only live around the corner."

Resident Jodie Lowe, aged 34, who lives on Sandgate Road, received a fine for parking on a grass verge outside her home, because her allocated parking space had been taken up.

She said: "A few times I have been blocked in my drive and have been late for work. If I finish work and arrive home at around 3.20pm, there is no where for me to park."

School leaders encouraged drivers to be respectful when parking but said it is a problem faced by 'many' schools.

Carl Fletcher, business manager at Glebefields Primary School, said: "It's a common problem faced by many schools, which is made worse by the fact we're in a cul-de-sac. We encourage drivers to respect other people and residents when parking."

Councillor Garrett said officers from the Highways Department attended the site in August when they agreed to the measures.

"Sandwell Council has had five months to get yellow lines down also a car park built, but there has been absolutely nothing done.

"The problem with parking has been years old."

The petition was raised to Sandwell Council leaders at a meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee held on July 13.

The description of it read: "Residents and parents of children attending Glebefields Primary School, Sandgate Road, Tipton, request a safe route for children attending Glebefields Primary School and alternative parking."

The council's reponse in the board papers said: "It was proposed to implement double yellow lines on the west side of Sandgate Road, Tipton, to prevent vehicles parking on the footway and keep a clear walkway for pedestrians.

"The grassed area on the corner of Windsor Road and Sandgate Road had been identified as a potential new parking area, however, funding would need to be obtained by the local neighbourhood team.

"Quotations for the work were being sourced. Following further representations from the head petitioner, officers were requested to look into the feasibility of providing railings along the footway and to increase the presence of the enforcement vehicle. An update would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee."

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Firsthand experience of carers' kindness

I HAD the immense pleasure of spending my Christmas weekend working with everyone at Grafton Lodge in Oldbury. Up to Christmas Day the week had been full of entertainment with my personal highlight being my old ally Ron Popple. Throughout 2016 Ron has supported me on several charity events and it was great to see him interacting with the service users and their families.

The other highlight was when one of the performers was a little late and I gave an off the cuff half hour of singing old songs with all present before being joined by the Spakeettes (members of staff) and some of the great grandchildren for a rousing version of 'Gerald' a piece I perform around the region about our old Queen Victoria.

The individuals at Grafton (part of Sandwell Community Care Trust) are all at various stages of dementia (most quite severe). Much has and is being written about the illness but it has to be experienced firsthand in order to fully comprehend the effects it has on the person who is ill but more so on those around trying to support someone they are losing very slowly.

The time I have been working with them several have passed away and it always amazes me how the staff cope with loss on such a regular basis, maintaining such dignity and compassion for the relatives.

To spend time in an environment that is often chaotic but always fulfilling is probably one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my life. 2016 saw us lose many notable people but those we lost at Grafton will always leave their mark as will their families.

DR BRIAN DAKIN
Tividale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Sandwell Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Freedom of speech will be lost

WITHOUT a free press, we won't have free speech, and next we won't have freedom of movement.

Have no doubt that once you lose a free press all your liberties will gradually be lost. Don't believe your politicians that they know best, and it is in your interest that they want to stop the media reporting the facts.

At the moment you can choose your newspaper, switch over the TV channel and turn off your radio. These are your choices, but once you have lost an independent press you have lost your freedom of choice.

Politicians don't want you to know what they do, big companies don't want you to question their ethics and big banks don't want you to know their profits.

Food producers don't want you to know what they spray on their food, and the pharmaceutical companies don't want you to know what drug they are pumping into you.

S T VAUGHAN
Yardley Wood

Speed restrictions are not the answer

IN response to D Hine, I am not about to drive along at 20mph to conserve fuel – that would require 2nd gear, and I suspect cars have further gears to increase speed and efficiency – I learnt about gearing aged 10 on my bicycle.

20mph restrictions condone dangerous parking, poor road surfacing and traffic management – all of which risk further accidents, whatever the speed.

Councils have got away for far too long providing us with rubbish roads, and 20mph restrictions are a cheap and nasty way of them avoiding doing a proper job. And do I hear 'twenty's plenty' arguing for improvements in road maintenance and management? If it needs selling (i.e. so called road safety initiatives, via campaign groups) then it is probably garbage in the first place.

If you do hear people pushing a road safety agenda, always remember to question their road safety credentials. Perhaps Mr Hine should think on and take a more cynical view, bearing in mind how much taxpayers put into the coffers via their motoring. Would 10 mph and £10 per gallon assist the powers that be further?

LEE WILLIAMS
Great Barr

Queen has own views

SO the queen told guests at a private lunch that she was in favour of leaving the EU.

She, like the other 18 million people in this country that voted to leave, is entitled to an opinion even if she is the monarch.

The national media are clearly on a mission to persuade Joe Public that if they kick up enough stink that there may be another ballot. We live in a democratic country and like it or not the people have spoken.

PAUL AGG
Wednesbury

Park life not with geese

WE Tiptonians resent being told what's best for our Victoria Park by goose sentimentalists like Ian Carroll from West Bromwich. In reality there are too many and they are a nuisance, if not a health hazard, because of their droppings. I do not want my grandchildren, their shoes and clothes to be covered in it.

G BENNETT
Tipton

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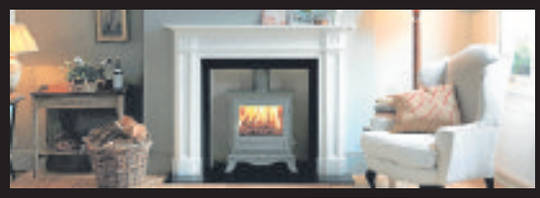

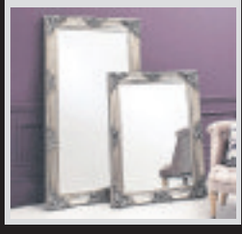

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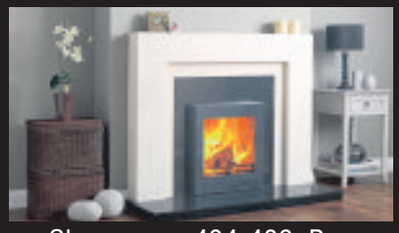
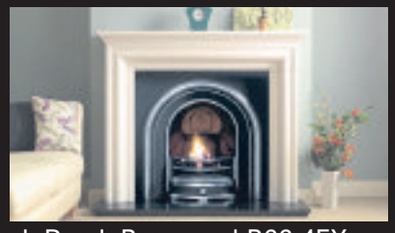

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Beds review defended by hospital boss

THE top boss of Sandwell's new £350 million super hospital has defended a review of bed numbers which could result in an extra floor of ward space having to be built. Toby Lewis, chief executive of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, said he would not 'shut his mind to risk or reality'. He said the review had been planned since 2014 and that it was a 'planned and professional assessment'.

The Chronicle's sister publication, The Express & Star revealed last week that a ninth floor would have to be built if the review found there was not enough room for the required number of beds. While the floor was part of the original plans, it was only intended to be for 'expansion and engineering space' and not for immediate use. If heath chiefs had to go ahead with the extra floor, it would not be complete until 2020 – more than a year after the Midland Met opens its doors.

Mr Lewis said: "This candour and mitigation planning is what, I would suggest, should build confidence locally in our organisation's integrity and commitment to real solutions.

"There is no point shutting our minds to risk or reality. We have time to remedy the position if out-of-hospital services will not operate in time at sufficient scale to address the issues."

Live dissection to be performed on stage

A TRAVELLING human anatomy event comes to Birmingham next month. Anatomy Lab Live offers a journey through the human body, and will see a live dissection performed.

Anatomist Samuel Piri will perform a the dissection to showcase health and disease on real internal organs.

The event runs at The Cuttle Bridge Hotel, Minworth, in Birmingham, on February 18 and 19 2017 at 6pm each day. Tickets are £60 per person.

Show respect for Corbyn, urges deputy Labour leader Watson

DEPUTY leader Tom Watson has moved to quell fears of a rift at the top of the Labour Party by calling for fellow MPs to respect Jeremy Corbyn.

The West Bromwich East MP said it was time for people to rally behind the Labour leader, who he insisted would be leading the party into the 2020 general election.

But he has reiterated calls he initially made last year for a rethink on freedom of movement, a move which appears to put him at loggerheads with Mr Corbyn and Labour's shadow immigration minister, Diane Abbott.

Mr Watson's comments come after he admitted that Mr Corbyn did not consult him on issues of strategy.

But he said: "We don't have a strategy committee as far as I am aware, and I don't know of any political party that does have one.

"He has asked Jon Trickett to mastermind our general election campaign and I fully respect that.

Upset

"It is time for people to realise that Jeremy is the leader that will take us into the next election and that there is no point in being upset about it.

"It is his manifesto and it is time for people to respect him."

Labour's split on immigration policy has risen to the fore in recent weeks, with shadow Brexit secretary Sir Keir Starmer the latest high profile figure to call for a change to free movement rules.

Mr Watson, who first advocated tighter controls on EU migration in the final weeks before the June referendum, said the Brexit vote had made it clear the system had to change.

"I am very clear the Brexit vote was as much about people telling the Government that they want to see Britain have control of its own borders," he said. "That means the status quo is simply not an option. As a party we should be listening to the British people and acting accordingly."

By Peter Madeley

Mr Watson also hit out at a recent poll that gave Labour its lowest rating since 2009.

The YouGov poll indicated almost half of the voters in 2015 had deserted the party and predicted Mr Corbyn could lose around 90 seats in 2020.

Mr Watson said: "Any politician that lives their day-to-day lives on the results of polls is not really in touch with what is going on.

"The polls don't interest me. I'm listening to people on the doorstep."

Mr Watson said he believed Labour could win the next election and that Mr Corbyn could be the next Prime Minister.

"He will have a strong team around him," he said.

Fears over Labour's prospects in the next general election have led to claims that the party may look to form alliances with other parties, such as the Lib Dems or the SNP.

But shadow minister John Healey said that making pacts was 'not the answer' to Labour's challenges.

Couple still want to Beebee together

Isabel and Don Beebee from Tipton celebrated their diamond wedding

A COUPLE who work tirelessly for the Royal British Legion in Tipton have been celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary.

Don and Isabel Beebee met a Princes End Primary School back in 1946. Ten years later, on Boxing Day, the couple tied the knot at the age of 19. Heavy snowfall meant the family had to clear a path for the pair to reach the church doors. Isabel said: "My cousin Geoffrey always jokes that its the only wedding he's been to when he's had a shovel under his arm. We held the wedding on Boxing Day because back then everyone was away on business and wouldn't have been able to make it otherwise.

Legion

"Don's uncle was the baptist minister so he took our service and my uncle played the organ so it was quite a family affair."

She added: "Don used to work on the railway as a signaller and I used to work in a newsagents in Princes End."

The couple raised just under £30,500 for the British Legion last year in the space of a fortnight.

Don is president of the legion and Isabel is now treasurer, but was previously the poppy organiser and distributed them across the region.

They have a daughter, Margaret Fereday, and two grandchildren.

On their 60 years of marriage, Isabel added: "We've had a lovely life together and we're such a lucky couple to have such a loving family around us."

Volunteers appeal over NSPCC abuse initiative

PUPILS in Great Barr have been learning to speak out against abuse, as part of an NSPCC project that is looking for new volunteers.

The charity's 'Speak Out. Stay Safe' project teaches schoolchildren aged four to 11 about sexual, emotional and physical abuse and how to report it.

The NSPCC School Service team spoke to Ferndale Primary School pupils from year groups one to six in a special hour-long assembly about how they can keep themselves safe by calling Childline or speaking to a trusted adult.

'Speak Out. Stay Safe' has reached more than 10,000 pupils in Sandwell, and 14,000 in Walsall, since it was launched in 2011. And this school year the NSPCC is hoping to get the message across to more young people than ever before. But the programme needs volunteers to help run sessions at schools.

NSPCC volunteer Jean Nutt, aged 68, led the assembly at Ferndale. She said: "I was a teacher who worked with children with special needs and so when I retired I realised I still wanted to have that link to children and the NSPCC School Service gives me that.

"I have been working as a volunteer for five years now and I realise how important the message is and if we can stop one child from being abused then we have I done our job."

Alongside her was Stacey Tanner, 35, who said: "I volunteered because I think it is really important to get our message out there to children. There are children that are experiencing abuse and who don't realise that is it abuse. The message that we put across really helps children to know that there are people out there to support and help them."

Jean added: "That is absolutely why we do it and if you have got a day a week because you need to have a day a week to able to volunteer to do this role, it is so rewarding to work with the children to listen to what they say and to know that some of the children don't have anyone to talk to. It's a really, really good volunteering role for anyone – men and women."

Ferndale Headteacher Ruth Gillett said: "Having worked with the NSPCC before, we know of the vital work they do in supporting children at all stages of vulnerability and development."

Naomi Davis, 10, said: "I loved every single bit of the assembly. All the kids learnt how to stay safe and if you don't feel normal it's all right to call Childline."

Charlie Swinnton, 11, said: "I loved the assembly. It was so inspirational."

Volunteers Jean Nutt and Stacey Tanner with Naomi Davis and Charlie Swinnton

NSPCC volunteer Jean Nutt leads an assembly at the Great Barr school

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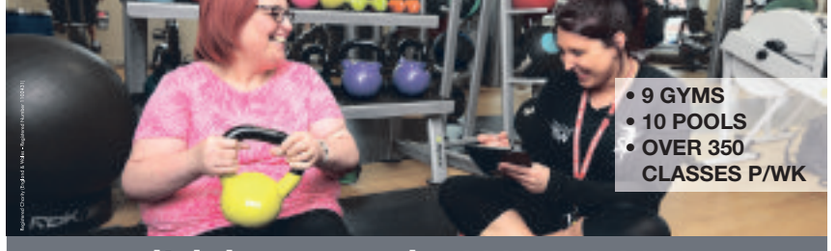

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Deputy in pledge to root out paedophiles

POLICE will spy on their own officers to root out paedophiles and those who sexually exploit vulnerable victims of crime.

The move by West Midlands Police comes after former constable Allan Richards was jailed for 22 years after sexually abusing boys over 30 years by abusing his position with the force.

Senior officers twice failed to stop him despite complaints and suspicions about his behaviour.

Officers and staff who have worked at West Midlands Police for more than 10 years will also undergo new vetting, according to details released by Deputy Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe in a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson. "West Midlands Police recognises there are a small number of police officers and staff who abuse and exploit vulnerable individuals whom they have come into contact with as part of their role," said Mrs Rolfe in the report.

Former officer Allan Richards

Deputy Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe

Remove

"The public have an expectation that everything possible is done to remove the risk posed by similar behaviour. Measures are in place currently within West Midlands Police and Professional Standards Department to tackle this issue. In order to keep pace and reduce this trend, various covert and overt methods have been adopted and some are being developed, some of which are technology-based."

The report, entitled 'Preventing and detecting crimes involving vulnerable people perpetrated by police officers and staff' states it is a priority to re-vet staff in its firearms and the public protection unit which deals with vulnerable victims such as those who have been sexually assaulted or abused. It states: "New recruits to West Midlands Police undergo rigorous vetting checks including checks with the police force where the person currently resides and over the last five years.

"Additionally specific posts, departments and roles are subject to enhanced vetting checks. The force is currently in the process of re-vetting staff who have been in the organisation for over 10 years."

Richards, who was also a scout master, was branded as posing a 'continuing significant risk of serious harm to the public' as he was sentenced for 40 convictions against 23 boys in November. His crimes included rape and indecent assaults dating back to the 1970s against 23 victims, 17 of which were abused or exploited.

Over two trials, Birmingham Crown Court was told the defendant, now aged 54, sexually abused boys at police stations, at scout camps, in swimming pools, in a park, at his home, and other locations that cannot be disclosed.

Some of his victims were from troubled backgrounds and already victims of sexual offences.

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Logan's art talent is on the cards

Roger Harris with Logan and head teacher Kelly Duff

THE winner of the Sandwell Chronicle Christmas Card Challenge for 2016 was Logan Loach aged three. The St Mary Magdalene CoE Primary School pupil proudly received his prize alongside his head teacher Kelly Duff and Express & Star representative Roger Harris recently.

As well as winning 25 copies of his design which Logan, of West Bromwich, was able to send out as Christmas cards to his family and friends – there was a special version which was put into a frame for him to hang up at home,.

Meanwhile the Stanway Road school which Logan attends was also the recipient of a £25 voucher to go towards its coffers.

10CC's stop-off at hall

BRUM beckons for pop legends 10cc as they embark on their Greatest Hits and More!! tour in spring – stopping off at the Symphony Hall on April 13.

Purveyors of some of the greatest pop records of the 20th century, 10cc have sold more than 15 million albums in the UK and 30 million worldwide. Noted for their studio polish, virtuoso musicianship, impeccable vocals and clever lyrics, their style was dubbed 'art pop'. This tour will feature a special video made by 10cc co-founder Kevin Godley.

Workers at Asda store stole £6k of booze

TWO ASDA workers stole up to £6,000 of booze by repeatedly loading up one of their cars in the supermarket's yard.

By Rob Cox

Home delivery driver Kalwant Dosanjh and forklift truck driver, Sukhdeep Purewal, carried out the ruse at Asda Great Bridge seven times in 2016. Booze included Bacardi, Famous Grouse whisky and Carling lager.

The haul was estimated to be worth between £5,000 and £6,000. The two appeared before magistrates in Walsall last Thursday and admitted charges of theft by an employee.

Mr Kulbir Paul, prosecuting, said the two would steal the booze on Sundays as 43-year-old Dosanjh was finishing his early shift and Purewal, aged 44, was beginning his late shift at the shop.

Explaining the pair's method, he added: "Purewal would phone Dosanjh to arrive at the back of the store and would open the gate for him. Dosanjh would reverse the vehicle inside and they would then load it with alcohol.

"Purewal admitted [in interview] doing that on six other occasions along with Dosanjh."

The thefts were brought to an end after staff at the store noticed a discrepancy when doing a stock check of beers and wines.

They were caught in the act on December 11 when 11 cases of alcohol, worth £1,170, were discovered in Dosanjh's car. The pair were arrested and police then searched their homes where they discovered further beer, vodka and whisky.

At Purewal's home in Priory Drive, Oldbury, officers also found £1,540 in cash of which he admitted half had been acquired through the sale of alcohol stolen from Asda. It was at the home of Dosanjh, in Viaduct Drive, Dunstall, Wolverhampton, that cans of Carling and four cases of Bacardi rum were found.

Magistrates decided they had insufficient sentencing powers and committed both men to Wolverhampton Crown Court where they will learn their fate on February 2.

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Driver hurt after car hits signpost

@WestMidsFire tweeted this picture of the red car mangled on the pavement following the crash

A WOMAN sustained minor injuries after her car crashed into a signpost in Smethwick. Two cars were involved in the incident in Holly Lane at about 1.30pm on January 3.

The woman, believed to be in her 50s, was checked over at the scene for minor injuries before being taken to Sandwell Hospital as a precaution. West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Jamie Arrowsmith, said: "We were called to the scene after reports of a two car RTC. There was a woman who was trapped inside one of the cars and had to be cut free – but had no significant injuries."

A West Midlands Fire Service spokesperson added: "The car badly damaged had hit a road sign and the lady inside had to be cut out. Both vehicles were made safe by us before we left the scene at 2.30pm."

Castors firm jobs at risk

EIGHTY jobs in West Bromwich are at risk after a £12 million-turnover manufacturer called in administrators.

Eddie Williams, David Dunckley and Jason Bell of Grant Thornton were appointed administrators of Colson Castors and Castors International on December 29.

The business has 85 employees with all but five based at the main manufacturing site in Hill Top, West Bromwich with the rest at Christchurch on the south coast. Colson imports and manufactures castors for the retail, medical and industrial market.

The business has continued to be loss making for a number of years with significant funding being provided by the global Colson Group. Following a review, the group was no longer in a position to continue to fund these losses. Without access to funding the directors of the companies had no alternative other than to go into administration.

Mr Williams said: "We will be urgently contacting potential interested parties, key customers and suppliers over the coming days whilst reviewing the position and assessing the options. We are not announcing any redundancies at this time but we will need to keep this under review."

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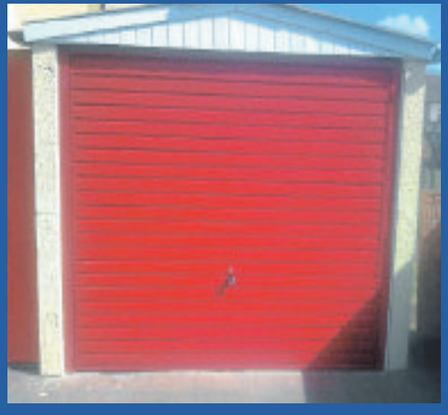

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Residents kick up a stink after sewage overflows

FOUL-SMELLING sewage has been spilling out of a manhole in a back garden – leaving residents without the use of toilets, sinks and showers.

The raw substance, which includes 'human waste', has overflowed from the drain and has affecting the water systems of nearby properties along Market Place in Great Bridge.

Engineers have now cleaned up the mess which was overflowing since Monday January 2. Mother-of-one Louise Birch, who shares the garden with an optician's below her first-floor-flat, said the waste water was getting into her sink and shower.

Louise Birch and daughter Charlotte, aged six, in the garden behind their home

Unable

Miss Birch, aged 39, who lives with her six-year-old daughter Charlotte Willetts, said: "The problem has happened about five times in the last 12 months. Severn Trent Water comes out and clears up the mess but then they don't fix the problem permanently. I have been unable to use my toilet, shower or washing machine.

"When I turn on the washer, waste water comes up the sink. If I flush the toilet, water comes up and out the shower. We can't wash in dirty water. The sewage contains human waste."

Miss Birch said she has had to take her daughter to her mother's house in West Bromwich to be able to wash. "It is not ideally travelling at 6pm each night to get there," she said. "I have been feeling ill since the sewage started appearing."

Sarabjit Mann, who owns The Great Bridge Eye Care Centre beneath Miss Birch's flat, said she has lost custom because of the sewage. Her businesses also shares the garden. She said: "I had to close my facilities on Tuesday. I haven't been able to use my toilet or sink for the past week. Having had no income has obviously affected me. The shop absolutely stinks of sewage. I can't expect patients to feel welcome in the shop."

Miss Birch complained that Severn Trent Water had been slow in dealing with the problem. "I first noticed the sewage last Monday. I phoned Severn Trent last Tuesday and they sent out two crews, who told me they couldn't clear it. A site manager attended on Friday and said a crew would be out within two hours, but no-one came until Sunday. We were told it was caused by fat blocking the drains."

Severn Trent said engineers from their partner Amey attended to clear up the mess. Engineers had cleared up the majority of the sewage. A spokesman for Severn Trent said: "We've been called out to an address in Market Place, Great Bridge on two occasions over the past two years – first in October 2015 and for a second time last week – after sewage overflowed from a manhole cover.

"In each case engineers from our partner Amey have attended to clear up the mess and to unblock the pipe that was causing the issue. We believe that the blockages are down to fat, oil and grease being poured down drains.

"We'd remind everyone to help protect our sewers by putting oil and fat in the bin or use one of our special 'gunk pots' which are available to order for free by visiting stwater.co.uk/gunkpot."

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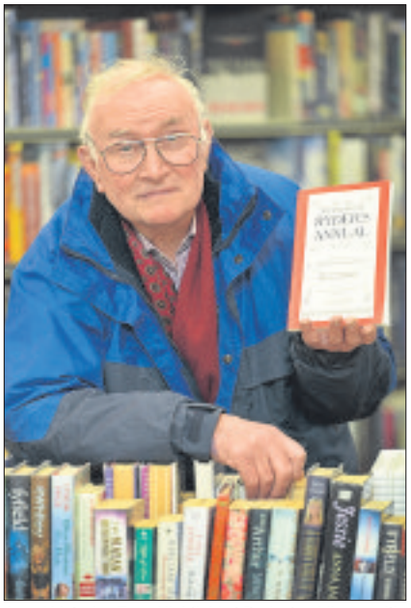
Wednesbury's Lower High Street during the early part of the 20th century

The up-and-coming genteel sport of tennis was starting to take off in Wednesbury

In contrast to the industrial times, Wednesbury's cricket scene thrived



Local historian Tony Highfield at Darlaston Library with the new book 'Ryder's Annual'

Ryder's Annual a unique glimpse of growing town

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jessica Labhart

IT has taken a year to put together, but now people have the chance to glimpse into the past and get their hands on a very special piece of Black Country history.

The Very Best of Ryder's Annual book has been put together by Bev Parker and Tony Highfield.

The book features some of the stories and pictures from the well-known Ryder's Annual, that was first published in the 19th century.

The book charts Wednesbury's history from 1878 to 1918 and goes some way in illustrating the people of the town's contribution to the war effort.

Tony Highfield, aged 74, of Bloxwich revealed how he first came up with the idea for the book. He said: "I was walking down Darlaston High Street when a friend of mine, Joan Bytheway, came up to me and said she had been given some old books for a jumble sale.

"She asked whether I'd like to see them. I said I would and when I went round there and saw them, I couldn't believe it. The books were two extremely rare Ryder's Annuals.

"I asked if I could borrow them, which I was told I could, and then I spoke to Bev about them. We decided to begin putting a book together on the best of the annuals, and went and visited Wednesbury Library to look at their archive of annuals, too."

The book was launched on December 3 at Wednesbury Library then at Darlaston Library on December 10. Mindful Gifts CIC, based on Church Street, Darlaston, a not-for-profit organisation, is also sponsoring the book as it specialises in gifts and activities for people with dementia.

It is hoped that the book will provide an insight into the life and times of local people's ancestors. The book also contains an almanac devoted to the First World War.

Mr Highfield said: "I just think it is so interesting to see the lives of the people in the book.

"People might be able to find their ancestors in there, old businesses, churches, groups, clubs and societies." In the introduction of the book, Bev Parker states: "The Ryder Annuals offer a unique insight into life in a successful and rapidly developing area. They feature images of the town's dignitaries, industrialists, councillors, photographs of the town centre and countless adverts describing Black Country businesses.

"For this edition of Ryder's Annual, I have chosen some of my favourite articles, adverts, and photographs from the editions that are to be seen in Wednesbury Library. Some of the images featured in the book are Lower High Street, the Town Hall and Art Gallery, Wednesbury Post Office.

"What I'd say is, this book gives you an idea of what life was like back then, but do speak to granny, before it's too late."

The book costs £9.99.

Miners from Wednesbury, working at a local colliery, in the cage which takes them underground for their shifts

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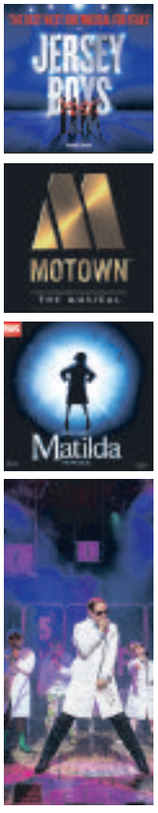

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Father's warning over drink-driving dangers

A FATHER who feared he would never walk again following a serious car crash while over the drink-drive limit is battling his way back to recovery.

Lee Isherwood was left completely paralysed down the right side of his body and could not remember who he was when he awoke from a coma.

The 29-year-old from Dudley was thrown from the driver's seat onto the road after smashing into a parked car.

He was rushed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham where he went into intensive care and it was not known whether he would walk again. It has been a long and difficult road back towards recovery and Lee, who has had to undergo gruelling rehabilitation sessions, can now walk unaided almost three years on.

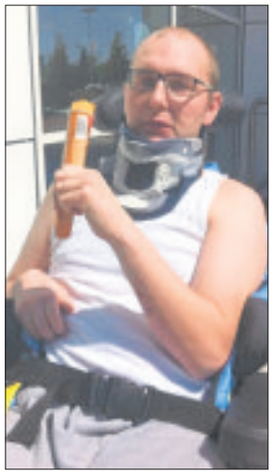
Unharmed

He was on his way to a party with two friends where he was due to be the DJ, on Mother's Day, in March 2014, when he lost control of his car on Burton Road, Dudley.

His two friends walked away unharmed but the situation was much more serious for the driver who was slightly over the drink-drive limit at the time.

Mr Isherwood, who has three young children aged seven, five and three has had a long time to reflect on the events of the night that changed his life so dramatically.

He spoke candidly about the mistake he made in getting behind the wheel that night and knows he has paid the price. I wouldn't wish what I've gone through on my worst enemy but it's my own fault for drinking and I'm trying to raise as much awareness as possible," he said. "I had two passengers in the car but they walked away unharmed and I'm so glad that it was just me that got hurt. Apart from being grateful to be alive I'm so motivated to get well as my three kids have lost out on so much."



Lee seen shortly after his crash

On the road to recovery at Portway

Police decided not to take action against Mr Isherwood as no-one else was hurt and the severity of his injuries meant he has not been able to drive since. He has been undergoing rehabilitation sessions at Portway Lifestyle Centre, run by Sandwell Leisure Trust, in Oldbury and despite his recovery being far from easy he is returning to something like his old self.

He said: "My weekly visits to Portway have become an essential part of my recovery and I absolutely love it.

"To start with I only had partial use of my left arm on that side, but the leg is stronger now too and I can walk on my own and my coordination and range of mobility is much better. Because my head trauma was so severe I had to re-teach my brain to function."The hydrotherapy pool at Portway got me moving again, but I wanted more, so it was onto the treadmill for my first few steps and now I'm doing step up and down exercises on the plate, basic weight lifts, roll outs and squats, etc, to improve my balance and core strength.

"I hope to drive again, get back to my former tarmacing job, as my old boss is keeping it open for me, and be able to play with the kids like any dad would."

Happy 2018!

Well, 2016 went by so quickly we thought we'd better get you ready for **NEXT** year!

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Sessions to help tackle disorders

A CHILDREN'S centre is offering sessions aimed at helping youngsters suffering with ADHD and ASD. Activities take place at Friar Park Children's Centre in Wednesbury and aim to help children improve fine motor skills and muscle strength.

Parents can also meet in a relaxed environment and share experiences of caring for a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder. Youngsters with ADHD have significant difficulties with things like poor attention, over-activity and impulsiveness.

Children's services chief Councillor Simon Hackett, said: "Our children's centres offer support for families in their local areas and provide a massive range of activities such as these great sessions aimed at children with additional needs." Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/children-scentres

Takeover deal to be sealed

CHINESE electrical appliance manufacturer Midea said it will complete the takeover of German robotics maker Kuka in the next few weeks after US authorities gave the deal the green light.

The robotics group includes a UK operation based in Wednesbury and the Thompson Friction Welding business, which is in Halesowen.

FOCUS ON WEDNESBURY

Old school could be razed to make way for housing

A FORMER Wednesbury school that has been derelict for years could be demolished to make way for housing.

The old Manor High School on the Friar Park estate, closed in July 2012. Since then it has sat in a sorry state. Windows have been smashed and there is an asbestos warning plastered across the front of the building.

By Clare Butler

The proposal would come as part of The Sandwell Housing Zone scheme, which will allow for more than 700 homes to be built in the Friar Park area over the next 10 years.

Councillor Joy Edis, who represents the Friar Park ward, said: "All of the side of that road down to the Walsall Road will hopefully have houses on there – it will be a huge new estate coming to the area.

Welcome

"It has stood like it is since being closed three years ago so this would definitely be welcome.

"At the moment its at the very early stages but the development is being talked about a lot. The three ward councillors are all hoping that it will be knocked down and the work for the houses will start on it."

The building closed after Manor High merged with the Menzies High School to create The Phoenix Collegiate in September 2010. The new school operated from both sites for two years until the Manor High buildings were eventually closed in July 2012.

Manor High School opened in 1968 on the Friar Park estate.

But claims that exam results were constantly low, together with the demand for places falling by the 1990s, saw many parents of pupils living in the catchment area choose alternative schools.

Alongside Wednesbury, the Sandwell Housing Zone also includes Grove Lane, Smethwick, which could welcome up to 900 homes.

The Friar Park area is a 39-hectare site jointly owned by Sandwell Council and Severn Trent.

The former Manor High School in Friar Park, Wednesbury, which is being earmarked for a housing development

Firm aims to expand its market

A FIRM specialising in designing and manufacturing flat roof support systems is on target to export one third of its goods every year after winning its first sales in Africa.

Strut Direct, based in Wednesbury, says winning its first order for £129,000 to supply water treatment plants in Nigeria with its own-design cable containment products will help it to achieve its export growth goals.

Steve Richards, managing director and founder of the family-run business, says it is now planning to expand its market in Nigeria and also look to new sectors, such as waste water and power and utility areas. It also plans to start selling its StrutFoot range of flat roof systems in Africa next year.

Christine Hamilton, interim regional director of the Department for International Trade West Midlands, said: "The West Midlands has a long and proud heritage of innovation and manufacturing and Strut Direct demonstrates that even a lack of language skills is no barrier to exporting success."

When Mr Richards launched the company in 2000, he worked from a small shed in Great Barr. It is now based on a 1.4 acre site in Alma Street, where he employs 25 staff. He plans additional industrial units, two new apprentices and eight skilled staff. He is also setting his sights firmly on increasing the export market.

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Mother is still haunted by the murder of her sons 15 years on

A WOMAN whose two sons were murdered by her husband has told of how their brutal killings still haunt her 15 years on.

Denise Williams last saw her boys, Bradley, aged seven, and Brett, eight, in February 2002 in the back of a 4x4.

But that day, after her violent and abusive husband Steven Wilson punched her and released her from the car, he drove off and stabbed the two youngsters to death at Hill Top golf course, near Sandwell Valley.

The killer, aged 44, from Linden Avenue, Great Barr, hung himself a year later on Mother's Day – five days into a life sentence after being found guilty of murder.

Speaking about the ordeal more than a decade on, Ms Williams recalled the moment she had to identify her two dead boys.

Denise Williams last saw her boys Brett in a car in February 2002

Horrible

She said: "I remember just seeing your children through glass like they are in a fish tank. I identified the bodies, it was horrible, absolutely horrible, really hard. And those are the things that I have to live through now. Even though it has been 14 years you still have the bad dreams and the things you have experienced."

Ms Williams, who now uses her maiden name, met Wilson when she was 16. She recalled how the relationship was great but within a matter of months it went down hill.

She said: "He treated me like a princess, put me on a pedestal. Six months in and he started to show his true colours.

"But he knew I had nowhere to go, no-one to run to. He called me all the different names under the sun. He would verbally abuse me, mentally abuse me, physically abuse me, punch me, kick me."

Steven Wilson

Bradley Wilson, left, and his brother Brett

Amid the violence the couple had two young sons, Brett who was born in 1993 and Bradley, who was born the following year.

Ms Williams believes just having them in her life made things bearable. She said: "Even though I was living a horrible life of abuse and putting up with drunken outbursts, just having the children seemed to make it all okay."

She had split with Wilson on several occasions due to his abuse and that tragic day in February 2002 came days after she had walked away from him for the final time.

They were all due to meet up at a restaurant, when Wilson launched his last attack on his wife in the car.

She said: "As I turned to get out the car, he pulled me, pulled my hair and pulled it into his lap in the car. He started punching the left side of my face, so me panicking managed to find the horn on the car and kept my hand on the horn of the car and also found the handle on the car door, which I pushed open.

"He panicked when I was blowing the horn on the car and he loosed me and then he drove off. That was the last I saw of the boys."

Ms Williams then described the unforgettable phone call she had from Wilson.

She said: "He rang to tell me 'I have just killed the kids and I'm going to kill myself'.

Corner

"At that point, you think to listen for the boys, listen for the boys in the background can you hear them, can you hear them and I couldn't hear them."

Her hopes were initially lifted when police claimed they had found her boys, but what she did not realised, until a moment later, was that they were not alive.

She said: "The sergeant of the station said 'Denise we have found the boys,' and gosh I was so excited, in the corner of this room was a big box of toys, and I was going to go and fetch them so they can come and play with the toys.

"He just knelt on the floor and he said to me Denise they're dead."

Ms Williams had to relive the horror of the experience a year later when the details were read out at Wilson's trial. After the killer was convicted, she admitted she only felt 'relief' when days later it was confirmed he had hung himself in prison.

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All's fare for art on the buses with driver's dad

AN artist has showed off his oil paintings of a famous bus route, at the very garage that inspired him.

Christopher Holloway from West Bromwich got out his paintbrush to capture Birmingham's famous number 11 bus, is Europe's longest bus route having recently retaken the title from a Coventry service.

The 27-mile bus service which celebrates its 90th anniversary this year, also inspired a song by The Woodbines in 1999, and features in West Midlands author Jonathan Coe's recent satirical bestseller 'Number 11'.

Now the iconic bus has been immortalised on canvas, with Christopher bringing his latest collection of transport paintings to the busy Acocks Green garage.

He was invited by National Express West Midlands to show off his work to the hundreds of staff who drive and look after the number 11 buses featured in these original new works. All the paintings feature buses operating at various locations on Birmingham's famous number 11 Outer Circle bus route.

Christopher was joined at the exhibition by his son Phillip, who has been a bus driver at Acocks Green for the past three years.

Phillip said: "It was a very proud moment for me to introduce my dad and his colourful paintings to my colleagues. Of course, I always thought his paintings were good, but it was great to hear so many other people agree with me."

With the original artwork now up for sale, Chris has also produced numerous prints and notecards from these and the many other transport paintings he produces throughout the year.

Artist Christopher Holloway with his son and bus driver Phillip at the Acock's Green bus station

Pay for workers in Brum is rising

AVERAGE salaries in Birmingham increased by 4.8 per cent in December, according to the latest statistics from the UK's leading independent job board CV-Library.

It puts Birmingham among the top cities for salary growth, outpacing many other major cities in the UK. Cardiff led the nation with a 17 per cent rise followed by Manchester with 5.8 per cent and then Birmingham.

Lee Biggins, who is the founder and managing director of CV-Library, said: "It's positive to see Birmingham witnessing significant increases in salaries last month, outperforming many other major UK cities.

"The fact that pay has jumped so significantly in the local area is a nice indication that businesses across the city are continuing to work hard to attract the very best talent, despite December typically being a quieter month for hiring."

Job vacancies in Birmingham were down by 4.9 per cent when compared to December 2015.

Army turns attention to 3,000 new recruits

THE British Army has launched a new national recruitment campaign – aiming to bring in an extra 3,000 people.

The Army aims to bolster its force to 82,000 soldiers by 2020. Currently it has around 79,000. Recruitment events will be held across the country, including in Birmingham next month, as part of the Belong campaign.

Report by Alex Ross

Television and radio adverts will also be played as part of the campaign created by Karmarama in partnership with recruitment agency Capita. One advert shows soldiers patrolling through snow up a mountain. Another shows them sheltering from torrential jungle rain. Both promote camaraderie.

Major General Tim Hyams, the General Officer Commanding the Army's Recruiting and Training Division said: "Life in the Army develops unique and lasting bonds of friendship.

Ambitions

"This sense of belonging is central to the opportunity we offer to those who wish to pursue a career in an organisation that makes a positive contribution to society."

Figures provided ahead of the recruitment campaign show that 77 per cent of adults in the West Midlands believe it is important to actively contribute towards a worthwhile cause.

The Army's new campaign calls on Brits to take their ambitions to do more for good causes to the next level and sign up for an adventure and travel opportunities.

The campaign highlights the humanitarian missions supported in many countries, such as Sierra Leone. Officers receive an annual salary of £30,922 after training plus pension. Soldiers will get £18,305 after training plus pension as a soldier.

This year Army Reserve troops from the 4th Battalion the Mercian, which has its headquarters in Wolverhampton, is to deploy to Iraq.

They will join regular forces from the Regiment's 2nd Battalion (2Mercian) – linked to the former Staffordshire Regiment – on a six-month tour of duty in a move that illustrates the increasing importance of the role played by the Reserve, formerly the TA, in the new look British Army.

The recruitment event will be in Birmingham, at the Bullring on February 10 and 11.

Dog owner em-barks on hard shoulder trek

TRAFFIC police and drivers were left stunned when a man was spotted walking his dog along the hard shoulder of a motorway. Officers found the man and his dog on a busy raised section of the M5 between the West Bromwich and Oldbury junctions.

A CCTV image of the incident

Tweeting a picture of the man and his pet, officers said: "Advised it wasn't a path (obvious) and taken off the motorway."

In the image, a line of traffic can be seen passing yards from the man. Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) traffic officers added: "We told him to paws, sit and wait. We then chewed his ear about the dangers and once off the motorway let him loose. Woof justice." In 2015, CMPG had to give a lift to a man walking his dog along the A38M into Birmingham.

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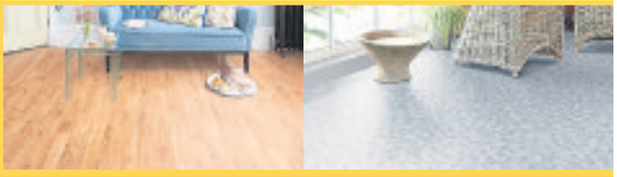

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We love to make people happy

He organised a 90th birthday party for Nelson Mandela and married then divorced both Chrissie Hynde and Patsy Kensit.

He leads the most famous Scottish band of all time – Simple Minds have shipped more than 40 million records, scored five number one hits and headlined Wembley Stadium – and also owns a hotel in Sicily. But these days, Jim Kerr doesn't even get recognised when he steps out of his Glasgow flat in the city's south side. It's funny how life changes as you get older. Don't You Forget About Jim.

Jim Kerr is one of the nicest and most erudite men in rock, though some of his ex-band mates might not think so. They'll be back on the road in spring – they headline Birmingham's Symphony Hall on May 17 – but before that there's the small matter of their beautifully conceived and perfectly formed acoustic album.

Simple Minds Acoustic features 15 reworked tunes from their Imperial Era. There's Chelsea Girl, a reimagined Don't You (Forget About Me) and Glittering Prize and there's a reworked version of Promised You A Miracle, featuring KT Tunstall, alongside a soft-strummed-but-still-ballsy Alive And Kicking. Who knew acoustic music could still sound, well, B.I.G?

Promo

Fans have been asking for an acoustic album since the dawn of time but, until now, he's manfully resisted. Simple question: what changed?

"To be honest, we've been getting asked for this kind of thing since back in the great MTV Unplugged days. It's always been in the air but one of the things that we were always trying to do was to look at new things. We're not great at looking back.

"It came about when we were doing the promo for the last album, Big Music, and Chris Evans, on Radio 2, got us in. He had been a real big fan. He told us to go in and do two or three songs acoustically.

"We bit the bullet and at 7am on the morning we busked about two or three songs."

The reaction was overwhelming. Chris's 11 million listeners were Mad For It, to coin a phrase made popular by Patsy Kensit's subsequent husband. And sure as night follows day, every radio station across Europe wanted a repeat.

Two or three songs on the radio is, of course, different to recording 15 for an album. The idea of an acoustic album was duly shelved and Simple Minds got on with Big Music, their superlative 2014 offering. But while it was easy to ignore the requests to play songs for radio, it was harder to ignore requests backed with hard cash.

"We were to-ing and fro-ing and then our manager came up to us in the January and, as always, money talks. He said a promoter in Switzerland wanted us to play up a mountain. And he wanted us to play acoustically. So we thought 'great'.

But getting one of Britain's great stadium bands to make music suited to a wine bar wasn't easy. How do you put the Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey-yeah, of Don't You (Forget About Me) on at an acoustic club? Not without reason were Simple Minds lauded for their stadium-friendly anthems.

Jim laughs. "We flitted through songs that we were sure would never work. We had always been swept away with production and a big sound. But when we just went down to the song, I didn't realise there was so much underneath."

Test

They booked a gig in London, deciding to test their acoustic set on unsuspecting fans at Hackney Empire.

"Talk about winging it. People from all over the world wanted to see that and we'd never done it before. Talk about being in it at the deep end. We were totally vulnerable.

"There's a kind of prejudice whenever you say the word 'acoustic'. People imagine two blokes on some stool surrounded by candles. But we didn't want to be little. We've got this thing of having energy and passion on stage. It's acoustic but it's a Simple Minds version, which is dynamic and atmospheric and all of that stuff."

And yet, it could all have been so different. There was a time not so many years ago when Simple Minds couldn't get arrested. They were yesterday's men. All washed up. Out of the game. They'd gone from having three consecutive number one platinum albums, followed by two that reached number two, to scratching about at numbers 141 and 80.

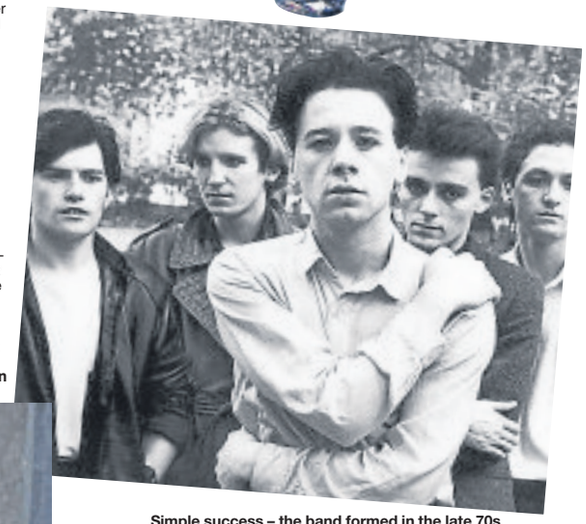
Radar

It would have been easier to call it a day. Jim could have spent his days at his hotel, the Villa Angela, in Sicily. Or, if performance was an itch he really did have to scratch, he could have taken one of the humungous cheques on offer for signing up to an 80s tour.

"We don't have a grudge to bear or anything. For a lot of people Simple Minds were off the radar for a long time and it's hard to get back on it when you've been off it."

So how did they do it? Jim's answer is simple: "Hard work. We've worked the last 10-12 years trying to do quality stuff. A lot of people have wondered why we'd bothered. But we love our story and the position we're in and we love our catalogue. We have different types of fans and for the hardcore, they want to see the band evolving."

Andy Richardson



Simple success – the band formed in the late 70s

Don't you forget – Charlie Burchill with Jim Kerr

Great minds – five number one albums

Lucky Sevenfold's dreams come true

Californian rockers Avenged Sevenfold promise a spectacular show involving space and artificial intelligence when they play

BACK when they were 17, they dreamed of headlining festivals and playing alongside Metallica.

Eighteen years later, Avenged Sevenfold are friends with Metallica and have headlined Download Festival.

The Californian rock giants play the Genting Arena in Birmingham on Friday, January 13, supported by heavy metal icons Disturbed. They first performed in the UK in 2004. "Ever since then, the UK has been a special place for us," said lead singer Matt 'M' Shadows.

Of that first tour – which saw the group play the O2 Academy in Birmingham – he says: "We had a little Sprinter van, in which we would spend nine or 10 hour drives just staring at each other. Then we'd hop out and play a show." Though Matt looks the hardened rocker, with his muscular tattooed body, he is also a devoted father. "I've got a two-year-old and a four-year-old. The four-year-old comes with us to shows but the two-year-old's a maniac – he's just nuts," laughed Matt.

Looking to the band's Birmingham show, Matt said the band had come up with something 'completely different'. "We've worked on something using space and artificial intelligence. We're super excited because the UK is going to be the first place to experience it. We'll be locked and loaded and ready for the show."

For the full interview by Kirsten Rawlins, visit www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/

Boss praises bluesy Ana

GUITAR-SLINGING blues songstress Ana Popovic brings her smoky blend of funk, jazz and blues to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Tuesday.

She has been described as 'one helluva a guitar player' by Bruce Springsteen and ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons said 'Ana rocks the blues in fine, fine fashion'. The 40-year-old Serbian singer has been nominated for five Blues Music Awards and is a major star on the contemporary blues scene. Her albums, including Still Making History, Can You Stand The Heat and Unconditional, have featured in the US blues charts. She joined the likes of Buddy Guy, Eric Johnson and Zakk Wylde on the recent tribute tour celebrating the music of Jimi Hendrix.

Ana now lives in Memphis USA but was born in Belgrade. She grabbed her father's guitar at the age of 15 and began learning from his impressive blues and soul record collection.

She formed her first band, Hush, 20 years ago in Belgrade but the group disbanded after she left her homeland to study jazz in the Netherlands. Soon afterwards she was contributing to a Hendrix tribute album alongside Taj Mahal and former Animals frontman Eric Burdon. She released her first solo album, Hush!, on a German label. Her love of the blues led her to America.

Ana is endorsed by Fender and has shared stages with BB King, Buddy Guy, Joe Bonamassa and many others. Her latest album, Trilogy, was released last May. Tickets cost £15 in advance or £17 on the door and the venue opens at 7.30pm. Visit www.therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

Ex-Deep Purple star ready to rock Robin

ROCKER Glenn Hughes is to return to the West Midlands later this month.

Cannock-born singer Hughes, of legendary band Deep Purple and the voice of The KLF's hit What Time Is Love?, is to take to the stage at the Robin 2 venue in Bilston on Monday, January 23.

The US-based rock star, who also fronted popular early 1970s Wolverhampton band Trapeze, in recent years was singer and bassist with rock supergroup Black Country Communion.

Hughes will be supported by Walsall band Stone Broken who were voted runners-up in the Best New Band category of the annual Planet Rock Awards 2016. The first band are on stage at 8pm.

Tickets cost £22.50 in advance or £24.50 on the door. Contact the box office on 01902 401 211 or visit www.therobin.co.uk

Lots of dance delight with the Strictly stars

STRICTLY Come Dancing The Live Tour kicks off in Birmingham on Friday, January 20, with five performances over three days.

These feature stars of the 2016 show, including Ed 'Gangnam Style' Balls and glitterball winner Ore Oduba with his new dancer partner Karen Clifton.

There is lots more dance delight in the offing for ballroom and latin fans this month. Brendan Cole brings his new show All Night Long to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on January 26.

Then Anton du Beke and Erin Boag are joined by Strictly singer Lance Ellington for Swing Time at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on January 28.

Ballet fans can look forward to the annual visit by the Russian State Ballet of Siberia to the Grand, February 5 to 7, with The Nutracker, Swan Lake and Coppelia.

Busy gig scene sees 2017 get off to a flyer

GOSSIP Girl actress Taylor Momsen brings her band The Pretty Reckless to Birmingham's O2 Institute next Friday, January 20, and Irish indie rockers Two Door Cinema Club have sold out their concert at the O2 Academy in the second city on January 24.

White Buffalo, AKA Jake Smith, plays the Institute 2 on January 21, the same night King Creosote (Kenny Anderson) is at Birmingham Town Hall. Watch out for rising star Declan McKenna at the Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, on January 25.

Major concerts for blues fans include Ana Popovic (see above) at the Robin 2 on Tuesday and the Bilston venue then hosts the Aynsley Lister Band on Thursday and Lil' Jimmy Reed on January 24.

Finally, veteran Aussie guitar great Tommy Emmanuel performs his It's Never Too Late album at Birmingham Town Hall on January 20.

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, January 12, 2017

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Taboo
(BBC1, 9.15pm)
James Delaney's shocking return to London society has set tongues wagging, but the swarthy adventurer's mission is far from complete. The city's residents view him with hostility and suspicion, but undeterred by their derision, James begins to enlist allies in his quest to reclaim his legacy and establish a new life for himself. However, an unexpected arrival at the reading of his father's will threatens to disrupt James's plans, and the true, poisonous nature of his new-found inheritance makes itself known. Historical drama, starring Tom Hardy, Leo Bill, Jessie Buckley, Oona Chaplin, Richard Dixon, Mark Gatiss, Jefferson Hall and David Hayman.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen. **11.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.15** Wanted Down Under. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.20** BBC News. **5.30** Regional Programme. **5.40** Celebrity Mastermind.

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. Jilly Goolden, Olly Smith, Sophie Grigson Michael Caines, Fay Maschler, Brian Turner, Cyrus Todiwala and Tony Singh compete in a "food and drink" edition of the unorthodox quiz.

7.00 Let It Shine. Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc's mission to assemble a new boyband for a nation-touring musical continues. This time, the hopeful stars continue with their solo auditions in front of a studio audience in Manchester. Judges Gary Barlow, Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and Amber Riley must decide whether any of the would-be pop princes are worthy of a place in Let It Shine's five-strong headline act, while Graham and Mel keep viewers up to date with all the backstage action, fun and gossip.

8.25 Casualty. A scuffle at an illegal rave leads an over-enthusiastic sergeant causing serious head injuries to a 19-year-old man and later planting drugs in his belongings to corroborate his claim that he had been assaulted twice by his quarry. Jacob is dubious about the sergeant's story and takes a police constable to one side in an attempt to persuade her not be an accomplice to her superior's crooked ways. Elsewhere, Elle's career is on the line as Connie goes on the warpath.

9.15 Taboo. James Delaney sets about enlisting allies to help him reclaim his legacy, but an unexpected arrival at the reading of his father's will threatens to disrupt his plans.

10.15 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents action from the latest Premier League matches, including Leicester City v Chelsea at the King Power Stadium and Swansea City v Arsenal at the Liberty Stadium.

12.00 Film: The Ring. (2002) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.45 Film: Higher and Higher. (1943) Musical comedy, with Jack Haley and Frank Sinatra. **8.15 Film:** The Magic Box. (1951) Biopic of cinema pioneer William Friese-Greene, starring Robert Donat. **10.00** Secret Britain. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Exploring China: A Culinary Adventure. (R) **1.00 Film:** Ice Station Zebra. (1968) An American submarine crew races to reach a Soviet satellite that has crash-landed near a British research station in the Arctic. Adventure, with Rock Hudson and Patrick McGoohan. **3.20** Flog It! (R) **4.00** Mastermind. (R) **4.30** University Challenge. (R) **5.00** Only Connect. (R) **5.30** The World's Most Extraordinary Homes. (R)

6.30 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. Exploring the forests, plains and bustling cities of Central Thailand, an area known as the nation's rice bowl. The programme explores how people live alongside animals in these areas, and the spiritual fulfillment to be found in these relationships. Narrated by Sophie Okonedo. (R)

7.30 Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. Neil Oliver, Chris Packham, Andy Torbet and Shini Somara investigate recent archaeological finds on the archipelago that challenge the received wisdom on Stone Age Britain, joining hundreds of archaeologists from around the world who have gathered in the Orkneys at one of Europe's biggest digs. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring puts the defence of the realm before personal pride, resulting in him nearly losing command of the platoon. Classic comedy with the Home Guard, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)

9.00 Imagine: Marlon Brando. Alan Yentob presents another documentary from the worlds of art and culture.

10.40 Film: On the Waterfront. (1954) A former boxer reduced to working for a gangster has his conscience pricked when he sees his boss's thugs kill a man. Drama, starring Marlon Brando, Lee J Cobb and Eva Marie Saint.

12.25 Film: Lay the Favorite. (2012) A Las Vegas cocktail waitress proves a success as a professional gambler, but arouses the jealousy of her mentor's wife. Comedy, starring Rebecca Hall. **1.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Rebound. (R) **10.25** Guess This House. (R) **11.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.40** River Monsters. (R) **1.10** Bargain Shop Wars. (R) **1.40 Film:** The Mummy Returns. (2001) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Brendan Fraser. **4.05** Dance Dance Dance. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 The Brits Are Coming.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

8.00 The Voice UK. The spinning-chair singing contest continues, as another selection of would-be stars put their musical skills to the test via the ears of new coach line-up Jennifer Hudson, Gavin Rossdale, Will.i.am and Tom Jones, who are tasked with selecting more acts to champion in the blind auditions. Sitting with their backs to the prospective pop-icons, the coaches select the ones they like based on their vocal abilities alone, but as always, it remains to be seen whether this batch of contestants will have what it takes to reach the end of the contest and claim that lucrative record contract with Polydor. Emma Willis is on hand to oversee proceedings.

9.30 Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon challenges Eamonn Holmes, Emma Bunton and Jonathan Ross to guess the identities of the celebrities whose homes he peruses.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Film: Terminator 2: Judgment Day. (1991) Sci-fi adventure sequel.

1.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **12.55** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **2.00** Darts: BDO Lakeside World Professional Championships. The eighth day of the BDO World Championships.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages. Penelope Keith starts her journey in the Cotswolds, and explores the celebrated village of Bibury, as well as Kelmscott, the home of William Morris; Slade, the village setting of a book by Laurie Lee; Down Ampney, and Hook Norton. Plus, she visits a village fete in Ebrington. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales embark on more waterway adventures, beginning 14 miles west of Venice on the Brenta, a river that was first canalised in the 13th century. Lined with palaces which were once holiday homes for Venetian nobility, they follow the route that Casanova and Lord Byron took to the city. After crossing the Venetian lagoon, Tim and Pru arrive at St Mark's Square, where they escape the busy Grand Canal and discover the tranquillity and beauty of the smaller canals that tourists rarely see. (R)

9.00 Film: Oblivion. (2013) A repairman is assigned to salvage the remaining resources from Earth, which has been left a devastated wasteland after a war with an alien race. He discovers a human survivor on the surface of the planet, an encounter that exposes secrets from the past that threaten the future of the human race. Sci-fi adventure, starring Tom Cruise and Morgan Freeman.

11.30 Film: Immortals. (2011) A man is chosen by the Greek gods to prevent a power-mad king from conquering the human and immortal worlds. Mythological adventure, with Henry Cavill.

1.35 Hollyoaks. **3.35** Win It Cook It. (R) **4.05** Hoarder SOS. (R) **5.00** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.10** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **9.45** Big Bash Cricket Live. **1.30** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **2.30** Budgies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **3.30** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **4.25** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **5.25** Kittens Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R)

6.25 NCIS: Los Angeles. Sam goes undercover as a bomb specialist when he investigates the death of a demolition expert, but faces a race against time to find explosives located across LA.

7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigates when a reporter is murdered as she prepares to break a story about a mysterious Libyan freedom fighter named El-Libi.

8.00 NCIS. Gibbs throws himself back into his work following his near-death experience, updating his appearance and tackling a new risky case alongside DEA agent Luis Mitchell, who wants help bringing down a drugs cartel. Concerned about his colleague's apparent enthusiasm to re-enter the field, DiNozzo discovers Mitchell is the son of a former NCIS agent who gave his life trying to save Gibbs' late wife and daughter, and this attachment is causing Gibbs to break his own rule against personal involvement in a case. However, danger is posed by Benson Long, the cartel's head, and Mitchell's top target.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce action from the latest fixtures, which included Bristol City v Cardiff City at Ashton Gate, Fulham v Barnsley at Craven Cottage, and Rotherham United v Norwich City at AESSEAL New York Stadium.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the latest matches in Leagues One and Two, including Walsall v Sheffield United, and Plymouth Argyle v Stevenage.

10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother.

11.30 Lip Sync Battle UK: Alexander Armstrong vs Jimmy Carr. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.05** Celebrity Big Brother. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Timeshift: The Golden Age of Coach Travel **8.00** Inside Chernobyl's Mega Tomb **9.00** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **10.00** The Young Montalbano **11.45** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.20** Elvis Costello: Mystery Dance **1.20** Later Presents – Elvis Costello in Concert **2.20** Great Guitar Riffs at the BBC **3.20** Close

ITV2
11.20 The Big Quiz – Coronation Street v Emmerdale **12.25** Ninja Warrior UK **1.30** 50 Greatest Harry Potter Moments **3.05 Film:** Horrid Henry: The Movie (2011) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10 Film:** Horrid Henry: The Movie (2011) **4.55 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **6.45 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50 Film:** The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **9.30 Film:** Wanted (2008) **10.30** FYI Daily **10.35 Film:** Wanted (2008) **11.40** Family Guy **1.05** American Dad! **2.00** Dads **2.20** Safeword **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.25 Film: Hidden Treasure (2001) **1.30** A Touch of Frost **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.00** Blue Murder **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Pawn Stars **11.30 Film:** Apache (1954) **12.35** FYI Daily **12.40 Film:** Apache (1954) **1.20** Nijinsky's Triple Crown **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Warwick and Kempton Park. Coverage of races from Warwick and Kempton Park. **4.00 Film:** Red River (1948) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Red River (1948) **6.40** Pawn Stars **7.05** Mr Bean **8.10** River Monsters **9.15 Film:** The Client (1994) **10.20** FYI Daily **10.25 Film:** The Client (1994) **11.40 Film:** Don't Say a Word (2001) **12.50** FYI Daily **12.55 Film:** Don't Say a Word (2001) **2.00** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4
11.00 Baby Daddy **12.00** Black-ish **1.00** Young & Hungry **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Friends with Benefits (2011) **11.15** Gogglebox **1.25** The Inbetweeners **2.25** Chewing Gum **2.50** Tattoo Fixers **3.45** Bad Robots **4.10** Suburgatory **4.50** Revenge

Film4
11.00 The Black Arrow (1948) **1.00** The Jane Austen Book Club (2007) **3.05** First Daughter (2004) **5.15** The Spy Next Door (2010) **7.00** Legend (1985) **9.00** The Family (2013) **11.15** Blue Ruin (2014) **1.00** Bully (2001) **3.20** Close

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What's New in 2017

Fri 10th - Mon 13th Mar - Comedy Weekend at Pontins, Sand Bay Resort - Daily Tea Dances, visit Highfields Garden Centre en route and Gloucester Quays shopping outlet on your return journey. ½ price drinks on one selected evening. Fantastic Value Break £96.00pp*

Sat 18th - Sun 19th Mar - Faulty Towers Comedy Show - London Weekend, 3 course meal included during your show. Based at the Quality Inn, Wembley. Optional evening's entertainment at the Irish Bar! We also take in historic Windsor on our journey to London. Fun weekend at only £149.50pp*

Fri 7th - Mon 10th Apr - The English Riviera - Babbacombe 4 days, 3 nights half Board at The De La Mer Hotel. Day excursions to Teignmouth, Brixham and Torquay are also included. We visit historic Exeter on our return journey. Only £176.00*

Fri 21st - Mon 24th Apr - Paris and Monet's Garden, 4 days, 3 nights B & B at the 4 star Novotel. Excursions to Paris, Monet's Garden and Giverny - Take in the serenity of the River Seine before relaxing in Paris. We also visit the former home of Claude Monet and its beautiful gardens. Includes Eurotunnel crossing - executive coach travel and admission to Monet's gardens. Only £245.00* Passport/Euro's required

Fri 26th - Monday 29th May - Hadrian's Wall and Bamburgh. Situated a stone's throw from Hadrian's Wall the Gisland Hall Hotel is an ideal base to explore the wonderful scenery. Your holiday includes visits to Carlisle, Gretna Green, the stunningly attractive village of Bamburgh famed for its castle and historic Lancaster on our journey home. Not to be missed - Only £245.00pp*

Fri 2nd - Mon 5th June - Bruge and Ypres - Bruge, the capital of West Flanders is distinguished by its canals, cobbled Streets and medieval buildings. Excursions to Ypres, Ghent and Ostend, Eurotunnel Crossing and taxes are all included in the cost of your holiday. Please join us as we witness the emotional Last Post at the Menin Gate. A memorable holiday for only £266.00pp*

Mon 24th - Fri 29th July - Waterford, Killarney & Dublin
Please join us for the 'Craic' as we take in the delights of the Emerald Isle. Based at the Evis-ton House Hotel in the heart of Killarney this is a great place to explore. We take in The Kingdom of Kerry, Dublin, Blarney Castle and much more. Whether it's Kissing the Blarney Stone or riding the famous Irish Jaunting Cars this is a holiday not to be missed. Only £416.00pp*

Fri 8th - Sun 10th Sept - Blackpool Illuminations and Fireworks Display 3 days - 2 nights half board at the ever popular Carn brae with entertainment - Free time in Blackpool - leisure time at the award winning Trentham Gardens on our return journey. Only £145.00pp* (Limited single rooms without supplement)

Fri 13th - Mon 16th Oct - Bournemouth Autumn Tints
Based at the historic Victorian Durley Dean Hotel situated close to the award winning beach - 3 days - 2 nights half board - Excursions to Poole and Swanage - Free bar between 7 - 9pm - We also visit Winchester on our return Journey. Only £226.00pp*

Fri 17th - Mon 20th Nov - Turkey & Tinsel at the Monterey Beach Hotel Christmas has come early as we enjoy the festivities at the Monterey Beach Hotel close to Lytham St Annes. Mince Pies, Crackers and a visit from Santa on this fun filled weekend. Complimentary drink - 4 day-3 nights' accommodation - Evening entertainment - We visit the award winning Trentham Gardens on our return journey to pick up your Mistletoe! Only £189.00* (Limited single rooms without supplement)

Mon 27th - Fri 1st Dec - Valkenburg Christmas Market
Held in the famous underground Grotto Valkenburg Christmas market is a fantastic place to be. 5 day - 4 nights half board accommodation - Day excursion to Leige, the largest festive market in Belgium. Your break takes in Holland, Germany and Belgium. Excursion to the Illuminated trees and fairy lights of Monschau. Only £296.00*

Passport/Euro's required *Denotes single room supplement may apply.

DAY TRIPS - SEASIDE - CONCERTS - THEATRES AND MANY MORE!

Just a few of our great days out

18th Feb -	**Cheshire Oaks**	£19.50
25th Mar -	**The Shard**	£49.50
25th Mar -	**London 'Do as you Please'**	£23.00
26th Mar -	**Mother's Day Ruin! Bombay Sapphire Gin Tour**	£36.50
19th Apr -	**An American in Paris - London Theatre**	£75.00
19th Apr -	**DreamGirls the Musical - London Theatre**	£75.00
23rd Apr -	**Brecon Mountain Railway**	£33.50
29th Apr -	**Kensington Palace 'Diana, Her Fashion Story'**	£37.50
6th May -	**Hull, City of Culture - The Weeping Window**	£24.00
7th May -	**Emmerdale 'The Tour'**	£44.00
17th June -	**Cliff Richard in Concert at Eastnor Castle**	£99.00
14th July -	**Olly Murs in Concert at Northampton Arena**	£79.50
5th Aug -	**Buckingham Palace Tour**	£40.00
6th Aug -	**Llandudno via the Horseshoe Pass**	£22.00
13th Aug -	**Kettlewell Scarecrow Festival**	£25.00
19th Aug -	**Oxford and Blenheim Palace**	
20th Aug -	**Porthcawl 'Sunday by the Sea'**	£21.00
24th Aug -	**Althorp House**	£37.00
3rd Sept -	**Heartbeat & Whitby**	£25.50
24th Oct -	**London's Monopoly Challenge**	£24.00

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CHOICE

Stephen McGann

Call the Midwife: The Casebook
(BBC1, 5.05pm)
Stephen McGann presents a look at the true stories behind the drama series, meeting midwives, nuns and doctors who worked delivering babies during the 1950s and 1960s to hear their accounts of the social and medical changes of the period. He talks to a former colleague of Jennifer Worth, writer of the original Call the Midwife books, and a photographer who documented the social conditions of the time. Stephen also returns to the home where he was born to share his mother's own story of childbirth.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.00** Wanted Down Under Revisited. (R) **2.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Spy in the Wild. (R) **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Call the Midwife: The Casebook.

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. The programme comes from Carmarthenshire, where Matt Baker explores the history of the region's sand dunes and Helen Skelton visits the National Botanic Garden of Wales, where she discovers how bees are being prepared for winter and reports on a plan to map the DNA of all the UK's flowers. Plus, Falklands veteran Simon Weston presents a guide to South Wales, Tom Heap looks at how otters pose a threat to fisheries, and Adam Henson presents the second of two reports on farming in New Zealand. Including weather for the week ahead.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow Holocaust Memorial. Fiona Bruce and the team examine items connected to the Holocaust and listen to the personal stories of survivors. Plus, a look at the work of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

8.30 Still Open All Hours. David Jason stars as Granville in this follow-up to Open All Hours, now running the shop with his son Leroy after inheriting the business from Arkwright.

9.00 Sherlock. Sherlock and John face their greatest challenge as the duo's long-buried secrets come to light and a threat from the past seems to have returned from the dead. They discover an elusive enemy has been playing a very long game – which is now reaching its devastating conclusion. Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman star in the conclusion of the fourth series of the detective drama. Last in the series.

10.30 BBC News.

10.50 Regional Programme.

11.00 The Graham Norton Show. (R)

11.45 The Celebrity Apprentice USA.

1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **8.00** An Island Parish. (R) **8.30** The Edible Garden. (R) **9.00** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Talking Snooker. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: The Masters. Ronnie O'Sullivan v Liang Wenbo. **5.15** Yellowstone: The Toughest Spring. (R)

6.15 Ski Sunday. Highlights of the men's World Cup downhill on the Lauberhorn in Wengen, Switzerland. Plus, a feature on Swiss freerider Jeremie Heitz.

7.00 City in the Sky. Dallas Campbell and Dr Hannah Fry present a documentary exploring aviation, beginning with a look at the challenges of getting aircraft into the air. The programme features a visit to the world's busiest airport to discover the work that goes into getting its millions of visitors off the ground. Plus, the construction of the world's largest passenger plane and the dangers of taking off from the coldest city on Earth. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis ushers another batch of would-be entrepreneurs before the panel's judgment. An inventor who claims to have created a new kind of surfboard and a parachute for Nasa reveals his idea for transforming the garden shed, Touker Suleyman agrees to road test a waxing product, and one applicant makes a shocking revelation as he tells the story of sleeping on his office floor.

9.00 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. The mountains and forests of Northern Thailand, where unusual partnerships develop between animals and people. Last in the series.

10.00 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, featuring Manchester United v Liverpool at Old Trafford and Everton v Manchester City at Goodison Park.

10.50 QI XL. Guests Matt Lucas, Jerry Springer and Cariad Lloyd join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig to contemplate the theme "noodles" in this extended episode.

11.35 Snooker: The Masters. Ding Junhui v Kyren Wilson. Hazel Irvine presents action.

12.25 Snooker: The Masters – Extra. **2.25** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Chopping Block. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** Judge Rinder. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.35** The Voice UK. (R) **5.05** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.15** ITV News; Weather. **5.30** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

6.30 Dance Dance Dance. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host the second stage of the celebrity dance contest, in which the contestants must impress judges Ashley Banjo, Tina Landon and Timor Steffens by recreating famous music videos by Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears – as well as a classic scene from the Blues Brothers.

8.00 Endeavour. The leader of a censorship campaign comes to Oxford on a speaking tour, and Morse is charged with protecting her in light of a series of death threats. A bricklayer working on a controversial pop singer's house is later found dead, and when a second killing occurs, a connection emerges to the speaker's movement, plunging Morse into the middle of a conflict over the nature of British culture.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.15 The Brits Are Coming. A special live show announcing which artists are in the running to receive gongs at this year's Brit Award ceremony. Includes performances by Olly Murs, Craig David and more. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold. (2009) Comedy sequel, starring Rupert Everett. **3.55** Channel 4 News. **4.15** Darts: BDO Lakeside World Professional Championships. The men's final of the BDO World Championships.

8.00 Walking the Americas. The second leg of Levison Wood's four-month trek across Central America involves walking for 400 miles and travelling through three different countries. He visits a unique Caribbean town that is populated by the descendants of shipwrecked African slaves, treks through a mountain region, and makes his way through gang territories in one of the world's most violent cities.

9.00 Film: Bad Neighbours. (2014) Premiere. A couple living in suburbia and adjusting to new parenthood are determined to prove they can still be cool when a household of students moves in next door. However, when their raucous neighbours' wild parties disrupt their lives, they decide to fight back, leading to a vicious cycle of one-upmanship. Comedy, starring Seth Rogen, Zac Efron and Rose Byrne.

10.50 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts, as Sean Lock and Stephen Mangan team up against Noel Fielding and Fay Ripley. The Brett Domino Trio assist Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner. (R)

11.55 Film: Hanna. (2011) A teenage girl trained by her father to be an assassin travels the world on a secret mission, pursued by the CIA. Action thriller, with Saoirse Ronan and Cate Blanchett.

1.55 How to Lose Weight Well. Dr Xand van Tulleken and dietician Hala El-Shafie help a duo slim down for a birthday bash in seven days, and water-only fasts are investigated. (R) **2.50** The Autistic Gardener. The team tries to make a small garden look bigger. (R) **3.45** Jamie's Comfort Food. Jamie Oliver prepares curried fish pie. **3.55** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.50** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.40** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Funniest Falls, Falls & Flops. (R) **12.25 Film:** Message in a Bottle. (1999) Romantic drama, with Kevin Costner and Robin Wright. **2.50 Film:** Six Days Seven Nights. (1998) Romantic adventure, starring Harrison Ford and Anne Heche. **4.45 Film:** You've Got Mail. (1998) Romantic comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

7.00 Now That's Funny! A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family friendly hook, featuring laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world. (R)

8.00 Brides Make You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee narrates a collection of internet videos featuring bizarre and humorous weddings.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. A chance to catch up with the latest events inside the house as the celebrities cope with living under constant surveillance, with all the arguments and alliances, as well as the revelations in the diary room.

10.05 Celebrity Botched Up Bodies. Alex Reid undergoes surgery on his nose to help his breathing, while Geordie Shore's Marnie Simpson discusses how her breast enhancement went badly wrong.

11.05 The Roast of Donald Trump. An event from 2011 in which the business mogul faces a barrage of insults from Seth MacFarlane, Gilbert Gottfried, Whitney Cummings, Snoop Dogg, Larry King and Marlee Matlin. (R)

12.35 Impractical Jokers UK. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Under the Tuscan Sun. (2003) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 David Starkey's Music & Monarchy **8.00** Sword, Musket & Machine Gun: Britain's Armed History **9.00** Rich Hall's Presidential Grudge Match **10.30** Bowie at the BBC **11.30** John Berger: The Art of Looking **12.25** Sound of Musicals with Neil Brand **1.25** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **2.25** Roger Bannister: Everest on the Track **3.25** Close

ITV2

1.40 2Awesome: Side Effects **2.20** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.40** 2Awesome: LA Story **3.00 Film:** Space Jam (1996) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05 Film:** Space Jam (1996) **4.45 Film:** Despicable Me 2 (2013) **5.45** FYI Daily **5.50 Film:** Despicable Me 2 (2013) **6.45 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **10.00** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

2.05 A Touch of Frost **4.20 Film:** Columbo: How to Dial a Murder (1978) **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** This Time Next Year **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.30 Film:** The English Patient (1996) **11.35** FYI Daily **11.40 Film:** The English Patient (1996) **1.40** A Touch of Frost **3.35** May the Best House Win **5.20** You're Only Young Twice **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

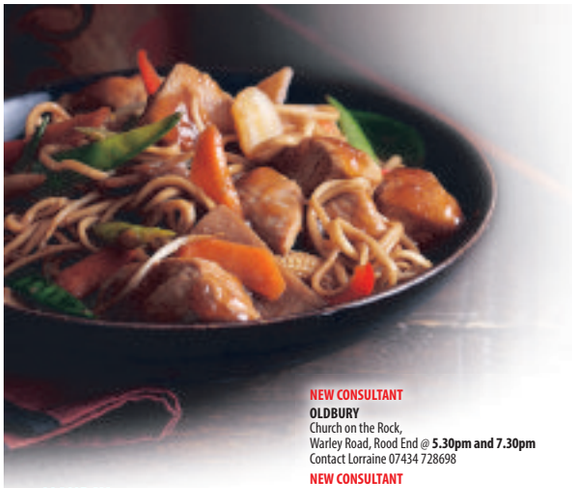
4.35 Film: The Dam Busters (1954) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40 Film:** The Dam Busters (1954) **7.10** When Ali Came to Britain **8.15 Film:** Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **9.15** FYI Daily **9.20 Film:** Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **10.00 Film:** Maximum Conviction (2012) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** Maximum Conviction (2012) **12.05** River Monsters **1.10** Hell on Wheels **2.05** I Want That Car **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

2.20 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.30** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** Johnny English Reborn (2011) **10.05** Tattoo Fixers **11.10** Virtually Famous **12.00** The Inbetweeners **1.05** Gogglebox **2.10** Rude Tube: Ultimate Stunts **3.05** Rude Tube

Film4

11.00 The Frogmen (1951) **1.00** One Fine Day (1996) **3.10** Sword of Sherwood Forest (1960) **4.50** Flight of the Navigator (1986) **6.35** Beautiful Creatures (2013) **9.00** Prometheus (2012)



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MONDAY
OPEN BANK HOLIDAY MONDAYS

NEW GROUP OPENING 2ND JANUARY
SMETHWICK
Brasshouse Community Centre
Brasshouse Lane @ **7.30pm**
Contact Mel 07935 447265

TIPTON
Allens Sports and Social Club
Newall Street, @ **9.00am, 11.00am, 1.00pm,3.30pm, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Lorretta 07968 656634

GREAT BRIDGE
St Peter's Church Hall,
Whitehall Road, @ **5.30pm and 7:30pm**
Contact Jodie 07886 426429

WEDNESBURY
Central Methodist Church (Wesley Centre)
Spring Head @ **7.30pm**
Contact Michelle 07857 280882

NEW CONSULTANT
OLDBURY
St James C of E Church,
Shelsley Avenue, @ **7.00pm**
Contact Claire 07539 950447

NEW CONSULTANT
OLDBURY
Church on the Rock,
Warley Road, Rood End @ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Lorraine 07434 728698

NEW CONSULTANT
ROWLEY REGIS
Dudley Golf Club
Turners Hill, B65 9DP @ **7.00pm**
Contact Sarah 07875 445462

TUESDAY

OLDBURY
Warley Baptist Church,
Castle Road East, @ **9.30 am, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Julie 07505 084916

OLDBURY
Church on the Rock,
Warley Road, Rood End @ **9.15am and 11.15am**
Contact Lorraine 07434 728698

WEST BROMWICH
West Bromwich Community Centre,
Gayton Road,@ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Jodie 07886 426429

WEST BROMWICH
West Bromwich Leisure Centre,
Moor Street, @ **9.30am, 3.30pm, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Pippa 07816 900149

WEDNESBURY
Woods Methodist Church
Coronation Road, Woods Estate,
@ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Karen 07547 515345

TIPTON
Tipton Christian Church
Waterloo Street, **5.00pm and 7.00pm**
Contact Lisa 07514 607650

OLDBURY
Sainsbury's, Freeth Street,
@ **5.30pm & 7.30pm**
Contact Ann 07815 643963

DARLASTON
Darlaston Sports & Social Club Ltd,
16 The Leys, @ **9.30am, 11.30am, 3.30pm, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Lesley 01922 634883

BRADLEY
St Martin's Church
SlaterStreet, @ **9.30am, 11.30am, 5.00pm and 7.00pm**
Contact Jodie 07547 771319

ROWLEY REGIS
Rowley Regis Disability Centre
26 Rowley Village, B65 9AT **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Kenton 07982 408088

WEDNESDAY

WEST BROMWICH
West Bromwich Community Centre,
Gayton Road, @ **9.30am**
Contact Jodie 07886 426429

DARLASTON
Darlaston Sports & Social Club Ltd,
16 The Leys, @ **9.30am**
Contact Lesley 01922 634883

SMETHWICK
Dorothy Parkes Centre,
Church Road, **9.30am 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Mel 07935 447265

WEDNESBURY
Woods Methodist Church
Coronation Road, Woods Estate, @ **9.30am**
Contact Karen 07547 515345

WEDNESBURY
St Barts Church Hall
Bttm Church Hill @ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Jenny 0121 556 5909

WEDNESBURY
St Luke's Church, Elwell Street,
Mesty Croft, **7.00pm**
Contact Jodie 07751 839830

BLACKHEATH
Blackheath Central Meth Church,
High Street, @ **9.30am, 11.30pm, 5.00pm and 7.00pm**
Contact Ann 07815 643963

OLDBURY
The Salvation Army Community Church,
Merton Close (off Pound Road) @ **7.30pm**
Contact Lorraine 07434 728698

TIVIDALE
St Michael's Church
Tividale Road, B69 2LQ @ **5.00pm and 7.00pm**
Contact Kenton 07982 408088

THURSDAY

OLDBURY
PortwayLifestle Centre,
Newbury Lane @ **7.00pm**
Contact Claire 07539 950447

WEDNESBURY
Lea Brook Church Hall
Leabrood Road North @ **7.30pm**
Contact Lin 07902 079559

TIVIDALE
Ormaston Sandwell Community Academy
Lower City Road @ **7.00pm**
Contact Sarah 07875 445462

NEW 1.30PM SESSION STARTS 5TH JANUARY
WEST BROMWICH
Stone Cross Library
Beverley Road @ **9.30am, 11.30am and 1.30pm**
Contact Lisa 07514 607650

WEDNESBURY
St Bart's Church Hall,
Bttm Church Hill @ **9.30am**
Contact Jenny 07751 259593

TIPTON
The Sportsman Pub (Separate entrance),
St. Marks Road, @ **9.00am, 11.00am, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact (Miss) Vinny 07412 074954

SMETHWICK
St Marks Church
Thimblemill Road @ **3.30pm, 5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Michelle 07516 255665

BRANDHALL
Kings Community Church,
Oak Tree Centre, Tame Road @ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Dawn 07859 010175

WEST BROMWICH
Stone Cross Library,
Beverley Road, @ **5.30pm and 7.30pm**
Contact Carole 07854 413929

FRIDAY

SMETHWICK
St Marks Church
Thimblemill Road @ **9.30am**
Contact Michelle 07516 255665

ROWLEY REGIS
Rowley Regis Disability Centre
26 Rowley Village, B65 9 @ **9.30am**
Contact Kenton 07982 408088

SATURDAY

NEW GROUP OPENS 7TH JANUARY
WEDNESBURY
Lea Brook Church Hall,
Leabrook Road North @ **8.00am**
Contact Lin 07902 079559

OLDBURY
Peters Well Community Centre
(Lightwoods Primary School)
Clent Road, B68 9ER @ **8.00am and 10.00am**
Contact Kerrie07923 129816

DARLASTON
Darlaston Sports & Social Club Ltd,
16 The Leys, @ **9.00am**
Contact Lesley 01922 634883

OLDBURY
Portway Lifestyle Centre,
Newbury Lane, B69 1HE @ **9.00am and 11.00am**
Contact Kenton 07982 408088

Or just come along
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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Mother Betrayed, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Five years after her husband is run off the road and killed by a mysterious driver, the head of a prosperous architectural firm decides to remarry. However, she's unaware that her new spouse has a devious plan to steal her daughter, her sanity and even her life. Psychological thriller, starring Lynn Collins. (2015)

TUESDAY
Who Killed My Husband?, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A widowed police officer embarks on a dangerous mission to generate enough income to pay for her daughter's hospital bills, causing her to question how far she is willing to go to save her child. Thriller, starring Andrea Bowen and Jim Thorburn. (1900)

WEDNESDAY
What Doesn't Kill You, BBC1, 11.45pm
Two childhood friends become criminals in the employ of a Boston mobster, leading one to develop a drug habit that nearly costs him his wife and children. After a spell in prison, he resolves to make a fresh start as a devoted family man, but his friend tempts him with the promise of an armoured car robbery. Crime drama, starring Mark Ruffalo. (2008)

Reasonable Doubt, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

THURSDAY
Twisted Sisters, Channel 5, 3.15pm
College freshman Sarah joins her mother's former sorority, but comes to learn it is run like a ruthless business rather than a sisterhood, promoting cut-throat seduction and destruction behind the scenes. As a consequence, she soon finds herself caught up in a devious power game that forces her to question where her true loyalties lie. Drama, starring Sierra McCormick and Cassidy Gifford. (2016)

FRIDAY
Reasonable Doubt, BBC1, 11.55pm
District attorney Mitch Brockden is involved in a fatal hit-and-run incident, and a convicted felon is charged with his crime. Mitch's guilt drives him to throw out the case when it comes to trial – but when the accused later goes on a killing spree, he feels compelled to bring him to justice personally. Crime thriller, starring Dominic Cooper and Samuel L Jackson. (2014)

Lucy's decision proves far from child's play

Lee Mack once said that if Lee and Lucy got together it would be the end of this show.

So after the pair's surprise Christmas marriage in 2015, fans thought they'd probably seen the last of hit comedy series. Mack's career has gone from strength to strength and he is now established as one of the UK's most recognisable comics.

Last year saw him return as resident team captain on Would I Lie To You?, host Duck Quacks Don't Echo, while in 2017 he will make his London West End debut alongside Griff Rhys Jones in the The Miser.

But despite these other commitments, thankfully, Mack changed his mind about the show in which he made his name, and Not Going Out remains the longest-running UK television sitcom still on-air.

Plus, a ninth and 10th series have also been green-lit by the Beeb, so Lee and Lucy (Sally Bretton) are not going anywhere just yet.

One thing that perhaps changed Mack's mind was a shift in direction for the sitcom, which now features more of a family element instead of the offbeat romantic comedy theme which dominated its first decade.

In the 10 years since Not Going Out began, Mack has himself become a father of three.

"It is quite weird writing about family life," he admitted in a TV interview last year. "We've slowed it down a bit, less jokes and more children's nappies."

Shane Allen, Controller of Comedy Commissioning at the BBC, is thrilled that Lee and Lucy are back: "Not Going Out is on its way to modern classic status as it clocks up another richly gag-packed and comic incident-heavy series," he says.

"The jump forward introduction of their kids provides Lee and Lucy with a new family domestic setting and springboard to broaden out their world from a 'will they, won't they?' dynamic to the 'why the hell have we?' that comes with parenting."

At the end of the last run, Lee and Lucy were a newlywed couple having their first child.

Fast forward seven years, and there are some major new additions to their chaotic world – baby Charlie now has five year-old twin siblings, Benji and Molly.

So how has Lee survived these dramatic life changes? And how are the parents finding the joy/relentless onslaught of bringing up kids?

If this wasn't enough for them to contend with, combine that with tricky family members in the form of Lee's lovably feckless father Frank (Bobby Ball), and close friends including the world-weary, or more specifically wife-weary, Toby (Hugh Dennis) and uptight ice-queen Anna (Abigail Cruttenden).

Thankfully, Lucy's parents Geoffrey (Geoffrey Whitehead) and Wendy (Deborah Grant) are on hand.

But what exactly do they make of Lee and Lucy's often mad house?

Last week we saw Lee trying to get the 'romance' with his wife back on track.

And in this second instalment, Lucy causes grave offence by choosing the wrong babysitter for their trio of offspring when the couple plan a night on the tiles.

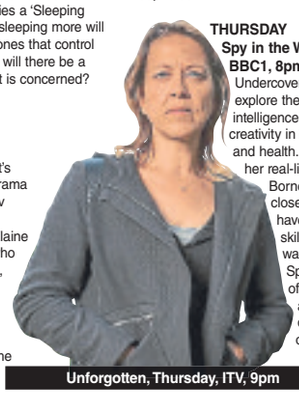
Bobby Ball and Lee Mack star in Not Going Out, Friday, BBC1, 9.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The Undateables
Channel 4, 9pm
Many of us have difficult navigating the unwritten rules of dating, but it's been particularly hard for 22-year-old Jamie, whose Asperger syndrome means he struggles to understand anything that isn't logical. However, he does have a passion for military history and strategy so as he takes his first steps into the world of relationships, he is armed with a plan. Luke, 26, from Hampshire, who is autistic, also believes in being prepared when it comes to love – although he sometimes finds it hard to make conversation, he's taught himself phrases in 15 different languages. But will his linguistic skills impress his date Alice, or will something be lost in translation? Meanwhile, Lizzie, 29 has a learning disability that means she struggles with some everyday tasks, but she still loves to shop – and she's now in the market for a boyfriend.

TUESDAY
How to Lose Weight Well
Channel 4, 8pm
Dr Xand van Tulleken, Hala El-Shafie help more dieters tackle weight-loss regimes. They begin by meeting Stefanie and Jade from Harrow who have just 10 days to slim down before the launch of their clothing label. Jade tests a low-fat diet, while sugar addict Stefanie must survive on foods that don't contain the sweet stuff. Later, the duo challenge fast-food fan Matt from Redditch to test a 'warrior' diet, which involves eating like a Roman soldier. And finally Rob from the Wirral tries a 'Sleeping Beauty' regime, in the hope that sleeping more will help his body optimise the hormones that control his metabolism and appetite. But will there be a happy ever after as far as his diet is concerned?

WEDNESDAY
No Offence
Channel 4, 9pm
The second series of Paul Abbott's Manchester-set police comedy-drama continues. As no-nonsense DI Viv Deering (Joanna Scanlan) and impulsive DC Dinah Kowalska (Elaine Cassidy) search for the people who are helping local gang the Attahs, including its fearsome leader Norah (Rakie Ayola), in child exploitation, they uncover tensions within the family that could lead to a breakthrough in the case. However, when the team is called to an armed robbery at a pub in a converted bank, it soon escalates into a life-threatening hostage situation. Elsewhere, PC Jonah Mitchell (Ste Johnson) pursues a man posing as a paramedic with a knack of slipping through legal loopholes.


Unforgotten, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

THURSDAY
Spy in the Wild
BBC1, 8pm
Undercover cameras help to explore the world of animal intelligence, ingenuity and creativity in their hunting, protection and health. Spy Orang-utan meets her real-life counterparts in Borneo to capture how, living close to local people, they have gained unexpected skills in sawing wood and washing with soap, while Spy Termite catches one of the world's cleverest animal tricksters, the drongo, as he tries to outwit a group of meerkats in the battle for food.

Unforgotten
ITV, 9pm
Further investigations into David Walker's life suggest he was a troubled man with a number of issues. Marion has a prickly chat with Cassie about her past and the inquiry reveals her close relationship with an IRA activist. As the police investigation encroaches on their life, Sara and Colin open up to their partners with secrets about their past. Whodunit, starring Nicola Walker.

FRIDAY
President Trump: The Inauguration
BBC1, 4pm
There's already been a lot of speculation about Donald Trump's inauguration, most of it concerning which big names had allegedly turned down the opportunity to perform. But no doubt there will still be plenty of pomp and circumstance as Trump is sworn in as the 45th President of the United States. As befits such a historical occasion, the ceremony is being covered by both the BBC and ITV, live from Washington, DC. As well as bringing us the Oath of Office, there will also be analysis from the channels' assorted experts, who will no doubt be paying particularly close attention to Trump's inaugural address for further clues about his vision for America and the direction of his presidency.

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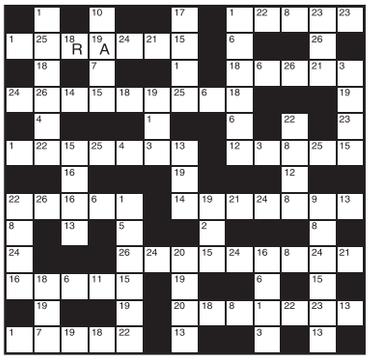
BRAIN GYM No.411

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
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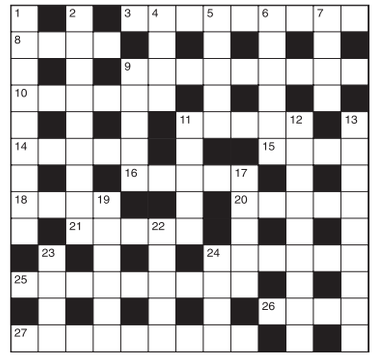
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	T	V	H	A	W	K	C	R	X	U	E	O
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
S	D	Z	Q	J	L	M	I	F	P	B	Y	G

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

3. Foreign food - make the GP eat this! (9)
8. Proper ones appear in the real estate market (4)
9. Governs, i.e., as a ruler (9)
10. This will smooth out the wave (6)
11. It's mounted when differently set by the editor (5)
14. The yarn in the novel is legendary (5)
15. Give heed to a brief message (4)
16. Refer to another court to pardon (5)
18. The boy to assume an attitude of prayer, we hear (4)
20. Splits associated with tenanted houses (5)
21. One in a strange sect makes a quotation (5)
24. Maid to spoil a Scotsman! (6)
25. One in unspoilt surroundings, like a bachelor (9)
26. Avoid a colloquial word of command (4)
27. The stage property is a toy (9)

Down

1. To disturb the fish is alarming (9)
2. True to life, but it is clear there's change (9)
4. Inferior alternative to the Post Office (4)
5. One who is entertained arrived at the right conclusion, one hears (5)
6. One by one (6)
7. Closely follows trite quotations (4)
9. One who tacks together a waste disposal unit (5)
11. Distress call about mother returning to Greek island (5)
12. Thorough antonym of up left! (9)
13. Finding a logical cause, as one is upset in the arena (9)
17. Walk on the imprint of a tyre (5)
19. Illuminated one undefined prayer of supplication (6)
22. There's no start to famine - this produces food (5)
23. In the Mediterranean I loved the colour (4)
24. The average man who's tight-fisted is (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

3. Pen-name (9)
8. Detail (4)
9. In utter poverty (9)
10. Diminish (6)
11. Maxim (5)
14. Foster (5)
15. Authentic (4)
16. Dance (5)
18. Retailed (4)
20. Well (5)
21. Give up (5)
24. Drive (6)
25. Harmonize (9)
26. Daybreak (4)
27. Dispute (9)

Down

1. Fiddler (9)
2. Unhurried (9)
4. Observed (4)
5. Unfasten (5)
6. Start (6)
7. Abominable snowman (4)
9. Postpone (5)
11. Shy (5)
12. Celebrating victory (9)
13. Deadly (9)
17. Burning (5)
19. Repudiate (6)
22. Regional (5)
23. Equipment (4)
24. Plot (4)

Sudoku

5		9		6				3
4	2			3	1			
			4			9	6	
		5			3			9
	8	7				4		1
3			8			7	5	
	5	3			2			
				4			1	5
1		4				6		7

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	1	8	5	4	7	3	9	6
5	9	6	2	1	3	4	8	7
4	3	7	6	8	9	1	5	2
9	6	2	8	5	1	7	3	4
8	7	5	3	2	4	9	6	1
1	4	3	7	9	6	8	2	5
3	5	4	9	7	2	6	1	8
6	8	1	4	3	5	2	7	9
7	2	9	1	6	8	5	4	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Away; 3 Trophies; 8 Vert; 9 Imparted; 11 Consequences; 13 Treaty; 14 Salami; 17 Reinvestment; 20 Latitude; 21 Dock; 22 Believer; 23 Sets. Down: 1 Advocate; 2 Arrange; 4 Rumpus; 5 Plain facts; 6 In the; 7 Side; 10 Getting the; 12 Mistakes; 15 Anemone; 16 Needle; 18 Extol; 19 Club. QUICK - Across: 1 Pull; 3 Badinage; 8 Rich; 9 Protrude; 11 Affectionate; 13 Career; 14 Divide; 17 Impertinence; 20 Take away; 21 Abed; 22 Horseman; 23 Bear. Down: 1 Parlance; 2 Lucifer; 4 Afraid; 5 Intentions; 6 Adult; 7 Eden; 10 Accelerate; 12 Defender; 15 Ignoble; 16 Strata; 18 Maker; 19 Itch.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. What does the M stand for in JMW Turner?
2. What do we call a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation?
3. Which actor's first names are John Uhler III?
4. Which plant has bird's-foot and hop varieties?
5. By which king was the inch defined in statute?
6. In which year was Greenpeace founded?
7. To which region was Cain exiled after he had killed Abel?
8. In which country are the Plains of Abraham?
9. Which city lies on the north side of the Firth of Tay?
10. To which flower family does vanilla belong?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Pig; 2 David Blunkett; 3 Imperial War Museum; 4 W C Fields; 5 North Atlantic; 6 Dandelion; 7 God Save the Queen; 8 Kevin Keegan; 9 Phil Spector; 10 Ink blots.

Niner: COUNTRIES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

18223654 gives a jewel,
24859 gives a second jewel,
169678 gives a crystalline compound.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

An angel overlooks Lake Malaren, Sormland

Thepicturesque town of Mariefred

Dawn over Lake Malaren in Mariefred, Sormland

Maria Printz, owner of the Printz bakery in Stallarholmen

How Sweden harnesses delight of simple but joyous traditions

Sarah Marshall reports

WINNING a Nobel Prize could arguably be the best Christmas present of all. But not for lyricist Bob Dylan, one of this year's best-known laureates.

"He won't even be coming to the ceremony," my taxi driver complains as we whirl through snow-dusted cobbled streets below Stockholm's City Hall. He has other plans, apparently."

Three days after the grand December 10 banquet, honoured guests are woken from their rooms at the prestigious Grand Hotel by singing angels carrying candles, part of the St Lucia tradition. It's fair to say Mr Tambourine Man won't be in their repertoire. . . No matter; the show will go on.

Swedes honour traditions with clockwork precision, something I discover on a weekend winter break to their capital city and its surrounding areas. Fleeing the commercialised circus of high-street chaos, I surface in a world of clean, crisp sophistication, where flashing rainbow lights and tacky tinsel are superseded by simple lingonberry wreaths and the flickering gold flames of advent candles.

It's Christmas time, and the markets have sprung up in the city. One of the most atmospheric is held at Hovstallet, the Royal Stable. Stooping in a loose-fitting tartan blazer, equerry Lars shows me the king's private property, which is open for public tours throughout the year.

"This is Stockholm's best kept secret," he whispers, as we weave through ornate royal carriages and past pedigree horses nuzzling into their mangers, entering a room filled with 38 gleaming harnesses.

"Every year, two are flown by hand luggage to your Buckingham Palace, where skilled craftsmen make repairs," Lars tells me. "We give the horses these jingle bells to wear in winter so they can be heard by traffic when the sound of their hooves is deadened by snow."

Inventive

As the morning wears on, shoppers pour into the sky-lit Riding Hall and a labyrinth of stables, where stalls sell national favourites such as smoked fish, marzipan pigs and a parade of inventive condiments.

Sheepskin rugs and cushions spiral with tight silky curls, and toy elves peer from an unkempt tangle of felt and wool. Ice scrapers with knitted handles are my novelty gift find of the day. Most people are gathering goods for their Christmas table. But to discover an even greater selection of produce, I head to the bread basket region of Sormland, a 45-minute journey from Stockholm by train. Residents of Stallarholmen are hosting a Charles Dickens-themed market, with carol singers gathered around a log fire and aromas of roast pork.

Gregarious baker Maria Printz is doing a roaring trade in sticky cinnamon buns and saffron cakes, traditionally eaten at this time of year.

Many of the local meats, cheeses and smoked fish make their way into a traditional julbord (a Swedish smorgasbord) served at Gripsholms Vardshus, a cosy inn located in nearby Mariefred. Vodka-infused salmon, herring pickled with fennel, and a salty roast gammon are all highlights.

I learn more about the origins of this former Viking settlement at the Callanderska Garden folklore centre, a 274-year-old red clapperboard house.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Traditional three-bed property is beautifully designed

A traditional three-bedroomed property, 81 Church Vale, West Bromwich, is a beautifully designed property in a sought after area that really needs to be viewed to be fully appreciated.

It is well positioned within walking distance of Sandwell Hospital, local schooling, public transport, Sandwell Valley Country Park and local amenities.

Its accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance hallway, two reception rooms, a conservatory and an upstairs family bathroom. This home was re-roofed in 2013), had a new boiler fitted in 2015 and majority double glazing replaced in January 2016. It comes with a mature rear garden and off road parking.

At the front is a block paved driveway and a gate to the side. In more detail the entrance hall has wood-style flooring, stairs off and an under-stairs storage cupboard.

The dining room has a bay window the the front and wood-style flooring. With windows overlooking the rear garden, the lounge has a gas fire within a feature marble style surround, wood-style flooring and a door into the conservatory. This room has tiled flooring and French doors opening to the garden.

Overlooking the rear garden, the kitchen has a range of wall and base units with hard wood style work surface above and incorporating a one and a half bowl sink with mixer tap over, tiled to splash prone areas, a built-in oven and hob with extractor hood above. The kitchen also welcomes integrated appliances including a fridge, freezer, washing machine and a microwave.

Off the first floor landing, bedroom one has a window to the rear. Bedroom two has a bay window to the front. Bedroom three has a window to the front.

The family bathroom is positioned at the rear of the property and includes a heated towel rail, a wash hand basin with vanity unit below, low level WC, a bath with shower over and fully tiled to walls and floors.

The rear garden includes a paved patio area, a lawn with various shrubs, plants and trees, a further patio area, metal garden shed (available for separate negotiation) and a gate leading to the side access.

KEY FEATURES

- 3 bedrooms
- Re-roofed
- New boiler
- Replacement double glazing
- Off road parking

WEST BROMWICH **£185,000**

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Paul Dubberley
TEL: 0121 5252111
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Ideal three-bed family home in a prime location

Occupying a prime Bearwood position on Lightwoods Hill, this three-bedroomed semi-detached house is an ideal family home for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £305,000 with no chain.

It has an entrance porch, an entrance hall, two reception rooms, a conservatory, kitchen, office space, a WC, garage, three bedrooms and a bathroom and loft space.

BEARWOOD
£305,000

This traditional property is a most sought after style, popular amongst local residents and in keeping with the character of the area. It is ideally situated within the heart of Bearwood, directly opposite Lightwoods Park and close to the Bearwood High Street. Bearwood is home to local shopping, bus services into Birmingham City Centre, access to several Leisure Centres and Warley Woods and Golf Course.

Call 0121 429 9986.

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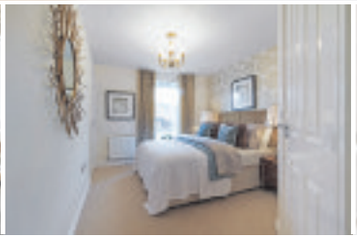
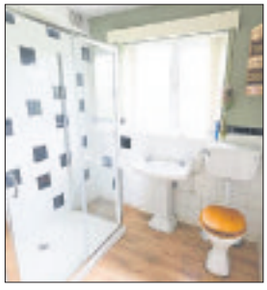


Photographs of typical Kier showhome interiors. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Available on selected plots subject to terms and conditions reserved by 30th January 2017. **Help to Buy is available upon request subject to terms and conditions. † Calls cost 2p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

Spacious semi detached in need of improvement



IN need of upgrading and improvement, this spacious three-bedroomed semi-detached house in Grosvenor Road, Oldbury, has good sized accommodation.

It is for sale through Tom Giles at £159,950.

It has gas central heating and majority double glazing, with an entrance hall, lounge and dining area, a kitchen, utility/verandah and downstairs WC, three bedrooms and a bathroom, garage and parking and established gardens to the front and rear. Contact Tom Giles on 0121 552 6171.

Forthcoming Auction

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Barrett Street, SMETHWICK

Modern end town house in this desirable location comprising, reception room, kitchen/diner, cloakroom, three bedrooms (master en suite), family bathroom, D/G and C/H, front and rear gardens, parking. NO ONWARD CHAIN!!

Offers Around £165,000

Jupiter development, BIRMINGHAM

Fifth floor City Centre apartment in the Sinope section of the popular Jupiter development. The property comprises an open plan lounge and kitchen, balcony, double bedroom, good sized bathroom. There is also a secure under ground parking space.

Offers Around £149,950

Rathbone Road, BEARWOOD

Mid terraced property comprising, hallway, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, double glazed and centrally heated, front and rear gardens.

Offers Around £174,950

Weston Road, BEARWOOD

Mid terraced property comprising, two reception rooms, refitted kitchen, refitted ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, D/G and C/H, front and rear gardens. NO ONWARD CHAIN!!

Offers Around £169,950

Park Hill Road, SMETHWICK

Mid terraced property comprising, two reception rooms, refitted kitchen, refitted ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, double glazed and centrally heated where specified, front and rear gardens. No onward chain.

Offers Around £109,950

Pargeter Road, BEARWOOD

Terraced property comprising, vestibule, through lounge, refitted kitchen, ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, upstairs toilet, double glazed and centrally heated, front and rear gardens. NO ONWARD CHAIN!

Offers Around £185,000

Pargeter Road, BEARWOOD

WOW WOW WOW!! EARLY VIEWING RECOMMENDED for this most impressive family home comprising, vestibule, entrance hallway, through lounge, refitted spacious kitchen, conservatory, three bedrooms (third bedroom with mezzanine), upstairs bathroom, double glazed and centrally heated, front and rear gardens

Offers Around £209,950

Durham Tower, BIRMINGHAM

First floor apartment close to the City Centre. The property comprises of entrance hall, lounge, double bedroom, kitchen/diner, bathroom, electric heating and double glazing.

Offers Around £78,950

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Hales Road
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NEW — £120,000 OFFERS

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

Vicar Street
WEDNESBURY

NEW — £109,950 OFFERS

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC F

Witton Lane
WEST BROMWICH

NEW — £155,000 OFFERS

1 | 4 | 2 | EPC D

Rose Close
WEDNESBURY

NEW — £209,950 OFFERS

1 | 3 | 2 | EPC TBC

Margaret Road
WEDNESBURY

NEW — £84,950 OFFERS

1 | 2 | 1 | EPC E

Holly Road
WEDNESBURY

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1 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

Wells Avenue
WEDNESBURY

NEW — £170,000 OFFERS

1 | 4 | 2 | EPC C

Finery Road
WEDNESBURY

NEW — £199,950 OFFERS

1 | 4 | 2 | EPC C

Oakeswell Street
WEDNESBURY

O/O £138,500

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

When **Josh from Skitts** came round he was warm, friendly and very knowledgeable of the local area. Josh understood how busy I am and even offered to do all the viewings with me! This was a total blessing for me. Their fees were very reasonable considering the standard of service they give. From start to completion their service has been outstanding and very hassle free for me! Natalie and her team are friendly and professional. I would highly recommend Skitts to anyone and everyone! **Ms T.** Please call **0121 505 1818** for your free valuation today.

Crankhall Lane
WEDNESBURY

£115,000 OFFERS

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC F

Hall Crescent
WEST BROMWICH

£154,950 OFFERS

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Vicarage Road
WEDNESBURY

£250,000 OFFERS

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC C

Rachael Gardens
WEDNESBURY

£154,950

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC C

Beebee Road
WEDNESBURY

£150,000 OFFERS

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC TBC

Shelton Close
WEDNESBURY

AUCTION — Guide Price £125,000

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC C

Hardy Road
WEDNESBURY

£175,000 OFFERS

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

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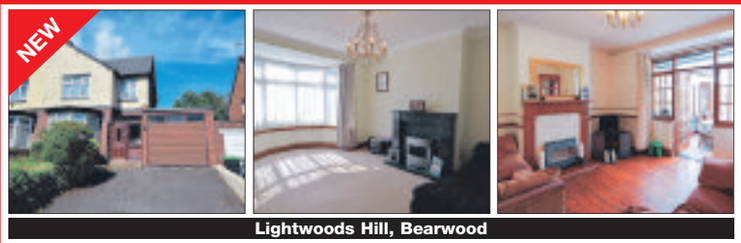
Pargeter Road, Bearwood

- Beautifully Presented Mid Terrace
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Period Features
- Lovely Family Home
- EP Rating E

Offers in the region of £219,950



Lightwoods Hill, Bearwood

- Semi Detached Family Home
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Recepption Rooms
- Ground Floor WC
- No Upward Chain
- EP Rating E

Offers in the region of £305,000

Rawlings Road, Bearwood

- Delightful Mid Terrace
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Modern Style Kitchen
- Ideal First Purchase
- EP Rating TBC

Offers in the region of £164,950

Herbert Road, Bearwood

- Extended, Traditional Mid Terrace
- Four Bedrooms
- Stunning Extended Kitchen
- Two Reception Rooms
- Ground Floor WC
- EP Rating E

Price £275,000

Katherine Road, Bearwood

- Delightful Mid Terrace
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Period Features
- Ideal First Purchase
- EP Rating TBC

Offers in the region of £174,950

Hagley Road West, Oldbury

- Extended Detached Property
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Modern Breakfast Kitchen
- No Upward Chain
- Off Road Parking
- EP Rating E

Offers in the region of £199,950

Apsley Road, Oldbury

- Semi Detached
- Three Bedrooms
- Modern, Open Plan Kitchen
- EP Rating F

Offers in the region of £174,950

Devon Road, Bearwood

- Charming Semi Detached
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- EP Rating E

Offers in the region of £239,950

Thimblemill Road, Smethwick

- Traditional Semi Detached
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Modern Extended Kitchen
- EP Rating C

Offers in the region of £164,950

Rosefield Road, Smethwick

- Charming Mid Terrace
- Two Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- EP Rating D

Offers in the region of £109,950

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WEST BROMWICH

Marnham Road **£240,000**

A modern end terrace property situated in West Bromwich. The property briefly comprises of having; Hallway, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Utility, Ground Floor Bathroom, Four bedrooms (en-suite to master)

Charlemont Crescent, West Bromwich, B71 **£210,000**

A three bedroom traditional style semi-detached, hallway, two reception rooms, extended kitchen, upstairs family bathroom, gas central heating (where specified), double glazing (where specified), and off road parking

Church Vale, West Bromwich, B71 **£185,000**

A beautifully designed, traditional 3 bed property, which must be viewed internally to be appreciated & comprising , two reception rooms, kitchen, upstairs bathroom, gas central heating (where specified)

Hampshire Road, West Bromwich, B71 **£150,000**

A three bedroom semi detached property comprising of a hallway, two reception rooms, a ground floor bedroom with en-suite bathroom. A kitchen, upstairs wet room, front, side and rear gardens

The Broadway, West Bromwich, B71 **£139,950**

A three bedroom semi-detached property comprising of an entrance hallway, two reception rooms, kitchen, conservatory, upstairs family bathroom, central heating (where specified), double glazing

Grange Road, West Bromwich, B70 **£135,000**

An opportunity to acquire a spacious 3 bedroom mid terrace property located within walking distance of West Bromwich Town Centre, tram links and major commuting routes, gas central heating & double glazing

Summerlee Road, Birmingham, B24 **£130,000**

A three bedroom semi detached house being sold with NO UPWARD CHAIN and briefly comprising of a porch, lounge, kitchen, hallway, downstairs bathroom, central heating (where specified)

Ash Drive, West Bromwich, B71 **£130,000**

A three bedroom traditional style semi detached house comprising of a porch, lounge, kitchen, conservatory, upstairs family bathroom, gas central heating (where specified), double glaing (where specified), garage

Hill Top, West Bromwich, B70 **£115,000**

A two bedroom end of terrace property briefly comprising of a porch, entrance hallway, lounge, dining room, kitchen, upstairs family bathroom, central heating (where specified), double glazing (where specified)

Overton Place, West Bromwich, B71 **£90,000**

A two bedroom first floor maisonette comprising of an entrance hallway, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, Economy 7 storage heating (where specified), double glazing (where specified), communal gardens and a garage en-bloc.

Church Vale, West Bromwich, B71 **£90,000**

An opportunity to acquire a 2 bedroom upper floor maisonette located in a popular residential area of West Bromwich that is within walking distance of local shops and Sandwell Hospital

Grafton Road, West Bromwich, B71 **£74,950**

An investment opportunity to acquire a spacious one bedroom first floor apartment located in a popular development of similar properties within walking distance of Sandwell Hospital, West Bromwich Town Centre

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GREAT BRIDGE WEDNESBURY

Gospel Oak Road, Tipton, DY4
£109,950

Excellent Size Middle Terrace family Home Offering spacious accommodation. Having the benefit of gas central heating, upvc Double Glazing and no upward chain. 3 Bedrooms and Situated in a good location.

Leveson Drive, Tipton, DY4
£120,000

Superb Family Home that Must be Viewed. Modern Middle Terrace offering Situated on a sought after development whilst having the benefit of upvc double glazing, gas central heating, fitted alarm, 3 BEDROOMS

Moncrieffe Close, Dudley, DY2
£47,950

Purpose Built Second Floor Apartment offering the benefit of security entrance doors, electric heating and no upward chain. 1 BEDROOM

Catherton Close, Tipton, DY4
£149,950

Modern DETACHED Family Home Occupying an excellent CORNER PLOT offering tremendous SCOPE FOR EXTENSIONS (STP). Having the benefit of upvc double glazing, gas central heating, NO UPWARD CHAIN.

Gospel Oak Road, Tipton, DY4
£150,000

Modern DETACHED having the benefit of upvc double glazing, gas central heating, solar panels and GARAGE CONVERSION. Offering NO UPWARD CHAIN

Brookfield Way, Tipton, DY4
£130,000

Modern Semi Detached Offering Good Size Family Accommodation Whilst Situated On A Sought After Development. 3 BEDROOMS

Gough Drive, Tipton, DY4
£164,950

Modern 3 Storey End Town House offering spacious family accommodation whilst situated on a sought after development. Having the benefit of upvc double glazing, gas central heating. 4 BEDROOMS

Holcroft Street, Tipton, DY4
£79,950

End Terrace Having The benefit of gas central heating, upvc Double Glazing and No upward Chain. Ideal Buy to Let or good szie family home. 2 BEDROOMS

Nightingale Drive, Tipton, DY4
£59,950

Purpose Built GROUND FLOOR FLAT having the benefit of upvc double glazing and gas central heating. Ideal buy to let investment and in a SOUGHT AFTER LOCATION

Cupfields Crescent, Tipton, DY4
£89,950

Middle Terrace having the benefit of gas central heating, upvc double glazing and offering NO UPWARD CHAIN. Ideal First Time Purchase. 3 BEDROOMS

Shaftesbury Road, Wednesbury, WS10
£135,000

<p>SUMMARYTRADITIONAL EXTENDED PROPERTY WITH NO CHAIN - A spacious semi detached home set in a sought after residential location with accommodation featuring three bedrooms, two reception

Phoenix Rise, Wednesbury, WS10
£95,000

<p>SUMMARYMODERN STYLE & WELL PRESENTED - A mid terrace property featuring two bedrooms, smart kitchen, lounge & first floor bathroom with white suite. Externally, there is off road parking & a

Myvod Road, Wednesbury, WS10
£129,950

<p>SUMMARYWELL PRESENTED & CHAIN FREE - A smart semi detached residence featuring three bedrooms, lounge, contemporary style kitchen with dining space & first floor bathroom.

Myvod Road
£105,000

A SPACIOUS SEMI DETACHED RESIDENCE BEING OFFERED WITH NO CHAIN - Accommodation features three bedrooms, a through lounge, kitchen with dining space & ground floor bathroom. Externally, there

Longcroft Avenue, Wednesbury, WS10
£170,000

<p>SUMMARYNO UPWARD CHAIN! A MODERN STYLE DETACHED PROPERTY OFFERING ACCOMMODATION PRESENTED TO A HIGH STANDARDDESCRIPTIONNO UPWARD CHAIN! A

Hall Street, Wednesbury, WS10
£69,500

<p>SUMMARYA MODERN GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT WHICH MAY SUIT A FIRST TIME PURCHASER OR LANDLORD - Accommodation includes two bedrooms, a lounge, modern kitchen &

Foster Street, Wednesbury, WS10
£204,995

<p>SUMMARYEXTENDED DETACHED RESIDENCE - HUGELY VERSATILE - CURRENTLY BEING USED AS FIVE BEDROOM ACCOMMODATIONDESCRIPTIONEXTENDED DETACHED

Cope Street
£105,000

DOUBLE FRONTED TRADITIONAL LIVING - A mid terrace house comprising three bedrooms, two reception rooms, first floor bathroom, kitchen & enclosed rear garden. VIEWING IS ADVISED TO FULLY

Cobham Road
£120,000

A WELL PRESENTED END TERRACE PROPERTY BENEFITING FROM OFF ROAD PARKING & A CONSERVATORY. Accommodation further features three bedrooms, lounge, modern style kitchen & first floor

Burrs Drive, Wednesbury, WS10
£85,000

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Shelsley Avenue, Oldbury

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Morris Street, West Bromwich

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Guide Price £184,950.00

Quartz, Hall Street, Birmingham City Centre

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- DOUBLE BEDROOMS
- EPC RATING: C

Offers in Excess of £179,950.00

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Clifton Road, Smethwick

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- MODERN GROUND FLOOR BATHROOM
- EPC RATING: E

Offers in Excess of £104,950.00

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2 | 1 | 1

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OLDBURY BRADES ROAD — Offers in the region of £249,950

4 | 2 | 1

The opportunity to acquire a spacious detached family residence with the benefit of central heating, double glazing, double garage and parking. Established gardens to front and rear. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating D.

ROWLEY REGIS THRONE ROAD — Offers in the region of £184,950

3 | 1 | 1

Completely refurbished spacious semi-detached family with the benefit of built-in appliances to kitchen and additional utility room, substantial parking to front, gardens front and rear. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating E.

OLDBURY PRYOR ROAD — Offers in the region of £179,950

2 | 2 | 1

Extended semi-detached house with the benefit of a conservatory and dressing room, bathroom, central heating, double glazing, rear garden with summer house, garage and parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating D.

OLDBURY GROSVENOR ROAD — Offers in the region of £159,950

3 | 1 | 1

Spacious semi-detached house situated in a quiet location and with the benefit of downstairs toilet, central heating and double glazing, garage and parking. Established gardens to front and rear. INTERNAL INSPECTION RECOMMENDED. EPC Rating D

OLDBURY EAST AVENUE — Offers in the region of £119,950

3 | 1 | 1

Terraced house in need of general updating offering ideal first time purchase or investment opportunity with the benefit of central heating, double glazing, garden to front, parking at rear and low maintenance garden. EPC Rating D

ROWLEY REGIS PORTWAY ROAD — Offers in the region of £94,950

2 | 1 | 1

First floor maisonette offering good sized well presented accommodation having been updated in recent years by the current owner and with the benefit of double glazing, garden at rear and garage. EPC Rating D

OLDBURY THE HUB, STONE — Price: £89,950

2 | 1 | 1

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OLDBURY VICARAGE STREET — £875 pcm

4 | 2 | 1

Large spacious Victorian semi-detached benefitting from loft conversion, central heating, double glazing and offering ideal accommodation for a family. Deposit £1200 EPC Rating D

SMETHWICK ABBEY ROAD — £750 pcm

3 | 2 | 1

The opportunity to let a well presented good sized terraced house with the benefit of central heating and private garden at rear. Deposit £1000. EPC Rating E.

WEST BROMWICH LINCOLN ROAD — £700 pcm

4 | 1 | 1

A semi-detached property offering opportunity for a long-term let with the benefit of central heating, double glazing, off-road parking. Deposit £950. EPC Rating TBC

ROWLEY REGIS THRONE ROAD — £680 pcm

3 | 2 | 1

Extended end Town House offering deceptively spacious accommodation benefitting of central heating and double glazing. Deposit £900. EPC Rating E

OLDBURY BIRCH STREET — £600 pcm

2 | 2 | 1

The opportunity to acquire a spacious well maintained terraced house with the potential for long-term let and benefitting from central heating and double glazing. Depost £850. EPC Rating E

OLDBURY LANGLEY HIGH STREET — £600 pcm

3 | 1 | 1

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24-26 Birmingham Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4DS T: 0121 552 1170

359 High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9QG T: 0121 314 8964

www.centralengland.coop

Turn To Us For Help and Support

In your time of need we'll take care of all the funeral arrangements.

- Est. 1907
- 24 hour service

G. Gibbs
Funeral Directors
44 All Saints Way
West Bromwich B71 1PZ
0121 553 0442
Dignity
Part of Dignity plc. A British Company.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY SCOOTERS from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

2 Leisure Time

car boot sales

CAR BOOT SALE
Saturday, January 14,
10am - 12 noon
St Peter's Church Hall.
Whitehall Road,
West Bromwich.
To book a stall call 07903 754123.

INDOOR CAR BOOT SALE
ST. MARKS CHURCH HALL,
Thimblemill Road
Smethwick
Saturday, January 14.
12 noon - 2pm.

caravans / motorhomes

We Want Your Motorhome
Finance Cleared
Fast Secure Payment
Top Prices Paid
Please Call AEG on 01384 848439 or Lee Jinks on 07740 895448
www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk

LUXURY LODGE BRIDGNORTH
Electric gated private small site, 3 large bedrooms, top spec lodge, fully furnished
£125,000
01384 480263.

jumble sales / fetes

HALLAM STREET METHODIST CHURCH
West Bromwich
JUMBLE SALE
Saturday, January 14, 2017.
at 12 noon.

holidays

caravan parks

LUXURY HOLIDAY HOME for Sale on 5* Park, DG, CH, bar & restaurant. Child & pet friendly, 20 acres walking woodland £24,995 inc 2017 site fees Call 01568 708 326.

3 Home & Services

furniture

katharine house hospice
Reg charity number: 1011712
Furniture not sold, why not donate it?
We can turn your quality used furniture into 1st class care for patients at Katharine House
Call us now on 01785 760715
for details or to arrange a FREE collection

FURNITURE NOT SOLD why not donate it to care for patients at Katharine House Hospice. Call us now on 01785 760715

HSL LINTON PETITE electric operated dual riser / recliner chair, 14 months old, as new. £400 ono. 07973 626820.

BIG IN BEDS
MONSTER MATTRESS & BED SALE
PLUS INTEREST FREE CREDIT
(subject to status - orders over £500)

IMPERIAL DOUBLE PLATINUM FINISH VAUGHAN STYLE BEDFRAME COMPLETE WITH LUXURY COIL SPRING ORTHO MATTRESS IN BELGIAN DAMASK
NSP £999 SALE £399
KING SIZE £50 EXTRA

KENSINGTON DOUBLE DIVAN SET WITH CRYSTAL BUTTONED HEADBOARD & MEMORY COIL SPRING MATTRESS
NSP £799 SALE £399
KING SIZE £50 EXTRA

OTTOMAN FAUX LEATHER LIFT UP STORAGE BEDFRAME IN EXPRESSO BROWN.
SINGLE NSP £399 SALE £199
DOUBLE NSP £499 SALE £249
KING NSP £599 SALE £299

Mattresses-singles from £29, doubles from £49, fashion beds, headboards from £9.99
OVER 1000 MATTRESSES IN STOCK

CREDIT EXAMPLE
SPEND £400 Deposit £40 9 x monthly payments £40 **0% interest**
SPEND £800 Deposit £80 12 x monthly payments £60 **0% interest**
Open Everyday 10am-6pm | *OPEN SUNDAY 10AM - 4PM*
BFC FACTORY OUTLET
CONEYGRE ROAD IND EST, GREAT BRIDGE RD, TIPTON DY4 8XF.
OFF A461 2 MINS FROM NEW TESCO & TOBY CARVERY
0121 557 6885
BIG CHOICE OF DINING FURNITURE & SOFAS

household appliances

A BIG SALE NOW ON Gas and electric cookers, fires, autos, fridge freezers, tumble dryers, built in ovens, hobs and lots more. 01902 403770 Past and Present 24-26 Church St, Bilston (opp town hall).

in your garden

6x5 Lap Panels
£16 each (inc vat)
WS3 2BQ
Bloxwich Fencing Ltd
Freephone 0500 506041 or 01922 712184

BLOXWICH FENCING
Supply and Fit or DIY
Credit cards taken • Free quotes
WS3 2BQ
Freephone 0500 506041 or 01922 712184

AT C B SHEDS & FENCING We supply/fit. Free quotes. Supply sleepers & decking 01922 720270.

items for sale

ASH RECLAMATION new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

HYDRAULIC BREAKER jcb/beaver hydraulic pack with anti vibration gun. good working order.£500 ono 07967820659

items wanted

ALL GOLD 9CT £300 PER OUNCE
CASH PAID TODAY
No amount is too small
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester Moorcroft
•Lladro • Old coins
• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY
• Diamonds and Gold Coins • Clocks • Paintings
• ALL SILVER • All Oriental Items
Pre'47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

WANTED FOR CASH three piece suites, up to £100 paid Call 01785 815925/ 07947 627142.

pc's, laptops & accessories

CLIENT COMPUTERS
Certified technician & Microsoft partner.
Repair & maintain laptops and PCs. In West Midlands.
Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
0121 556 9481

CLIENT COMPUTERS Certified technician and microsoft partner. Repair and maintain laptops and pcs. Virus removal, broken screens, wifi, windows problem etc. Laptops available. 0121 556 9481

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates, 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation, Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

specialists at your service

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

aerials

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
SATELLITE & CCTV
AERIALS FITTED FROM £75
Work Guaranteed
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857
VISA MasterCard CheckATrade.com

appliance repairs

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 / 07801 746853.

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 / 07801 746853.

bathrooms

JR Bathrooms & Wetrooms
Over 20 years experience in bathroom & kitchen installations.
TILING/PLASTERING/ FREE QUOTES
07392 379741 or 01543 529648

BATHROOM DESIGN. All bathrooms fitted, tiling, flooring, complete bathrooms. 07850 382548.

JR Bathrooms Over 20 years experience in bathrooms and plastering. 07392 379741 / 01543 529648.

building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including: Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

AD DAMP PROOFING
APPROVED CONTRACTOR
All damp problems, roofing, all building & alteration work
FREE QUOTES
07538 118034 or 01902 752161

building supplies

QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING @ low prices. Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

cctv

RAPID SECURITY CCTV & alarms cameras, supplied and fitted, domestic and commercial, same day service, free call out. Call Robbi on 07960 173589/ 0800 633 5899.

carpentry & joinery

B&S Joinery
Six internal pre-primed doors fully fitted from £350. External, Upvc, and fire doors.
All aspects of carpentry undertaken.
Family run 30 years experience
07958 552625, 0121 5322672

CARPENTRY AND JOINERY Kitchens, fitted wardrobes, doors, flooring, staircases and refurbs. 07903 234137 or 0121 4939733.

carpet fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598 / 07941 619694.

cleaning

Sparkle Clean
Cleaning, Painting & Handyman Services
A standard of Excellence
Office or Household cleaning
Discounted rates for regular customers
FREE Enquiries & quotes call
07818 238893 CRB checked

SURE CLEAN SOLUTIONS
Domestic & Commercial cleaners
For all general cleaning of: Factories, Offices, Houses, Shops, Retail Parks, Front of shop cleaning, Also Garden maintenance and Graffiti removal.
01922 334045

damp proof control

JUST DAMP PROOFING All areas covered. Rising damp, penetration damp. Call Mark on 07903 029768.

fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
6 x 5 Heavy Duty Lap Panels
£12.95 each
Fitting service available or DIY.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

gardening services

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

J&B TREE CARE Landscape and Jetwashing Services. All Pesticide /Fungicide work. Free fixed quotes: 07786 166856/ 01922 449268.

gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

GAS SERVICES
- Boilers • Cookers
- Fires • Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

I average around 1 to 2 phone calls a day from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels.

Mr Causer.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

DAVIES INSTALLATIONS Building work, plumbing, decking, supply & fit kitchens and bathrooms. Call: 07793 747829 / 01543 300444.

HANDY MAN - Most trades, plumbing, heating, gardening & decorating. Gutter clean no ladders, free quotes. 07850 559315.

house clearances

ALL ROUND CLEARANCE
Professional family run business
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Kev
07794 912844

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

kitchen fitters

THE KITCHEN FITTER Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

lock services

LOCKRITE local father and daughter locksmiths, lock-outs, broken locks, UPVC specialist, 24hr service. 01922 780078.

painters / decorators

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering, Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

LADY DECORATOR, full house or one wall - to customer requirments. For a quote call 07522 643706.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

plastering

MINT PLASTERING
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01922 606503 / 07519 694516

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

MINT PLASTERING & rendering 30 yrs exp. All work guaranteed. 01922 606503 or 07519 694516.

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

plumbers

LAURIE KENNEDY domestic plumbing, no job too small, fully insured, contact me 07901 345884.

plumbing & heating

ALL PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN
No job too small or large.
Call Will for a free quote
07521 411108

A.A HEATING & PLUMBING. All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. Kitchen/ Bathrooms: 01922 660410

GAS CENTRAL HEATING Central heating and Boiler changes. Gas Safe, Free Quotes: 07497 826697.

PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN No job too small or large. Call Will for a free quote on: 07521 411108.

removals

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
07749 941319

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN, Removals, clearances, large/small. 01902 741546, 07899 635852.

FURNITURE REMOVALS We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Call Keith on 07867 862227.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KT REMOVALS 12 yrs exp. Single items to full load removals. Local / distance. Call Ric: 07771 727119.

roofing

Roofing Services
Est. over 25 years
Roof Repairs from £30
Gutters Cleaned from £20
New Roofs from £2,500
All Areas Covered
0800 9178898
www.birminghamroofing.co.uk

skip hire

A absolute affordable skip
RUSSELL SKIPS
Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
(0121) 520 3388 / 07721 387990

AAA SKIP HIRE All sizes available, competitive prices. Call: 01922 711411(option 2) or 07592 940556.

GOLDSHILL SKIPS
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
0121 557 3346

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy!

It definitely works for us!"

Grinsells Skip Hire.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

upholstery

MR B'S UPHOLSTERY
RE- UPHOLSTERING OF SOFA'S, DINING FURNITURE, CARAVANS, CAR RETRIMS AND MORE.
www.mrbsupholstery.co.uk
01543 500677 07738 851601

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

5 Business & Farming

commercial premises sale / let

YARD / STORAGE SPACE ideal for parking vehicles with on site security. Price negotiable. Contact Indi 07912 694158.

business directory

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

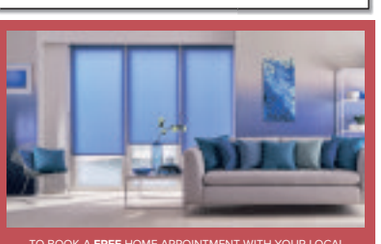
6 Property

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

blinds

MADE-TO-MEASURE
BLINDS SALE
UP TO 50% OFF*
MEASURING & FITTING INCLUDED
BLINDS I CURTAINS I SHUTTERS I CARPETS



HILLARYS
TO BOOK A **FREE** HOME APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR LOCAL ADVISOR CALL **0800 916 6563** OR VISIT **hillarys.co.uk**
*Ts & Cs apply

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!

Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE

You agree the price, we buy the house.

BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

- NO AGENTS FEES
- COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- FREE SOLICITORS
- ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

30 yrs

0800 999 999 6

or 01384 226086 24/7 www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

CASH NOW wolverhampton properties

FOR YOUR HOUSE

- Legal Fees Paid
- No Fees
- Any Condition
- Guaranteed Offer
- Repossessions Stopped

We can buy your house in 2 days

0800 389 6788

01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."

Black Country Homes

For great business results call 01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish

£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

Houses / Land Required

Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154

Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049

Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901

www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

Need to sell your home fast?

We can help you make a fresh start

With solutions to suit ... you can clear your debts and make a fresh start

Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**

- ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
- COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
- FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
- FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
- LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

WHY NOT CALL US TODAY for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?

0121 405 0767

*Terms and Conditions apply

OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"

Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

For great business results call 01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

MORE CATEGORIES MORE CLASSIFICATIONS MORE CHOICE

01902 317878 ClassifiedAds

accommodation to let

J9 Accommodation

NO DEPOSIT

★MOVE IN TODAY★

Studios *from* £90pw*

Rooms *from* £65pw*

*Includes Most Bills

CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST

Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme

01902 213121

J9accommodation.com

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

TWO-BED FLAT Heath Hays, secure complex, parking, £550pcm. No DSS. 07971 560336.

7 Jobs

courses

ADR COURSES WITH CRH Now back in the Black Country. From W/C 26th Sept 0121 3231777

dentistry

DENTAL NURSES required, GDC registered. * Flexible hours F/T, P/T available - 7 days per week (8am - 11pm)* Wage 12K - 20 k - negotiable, overtime & bonuses. * Immediate starts. Email CV to info@scottarmsdentalpractice.com

drivers

CLASS 1 DRIVERS - Tramping. Nights out etc. Good rates of pay. Call on Dave 07837 202783

HGV DRIVER required up to Class 2 HGV licence, manual lifting, West Bromwich, good rates, some early starts, nationwide collections, occasional nights out. Tel BCR Services Ltd 0121 505 7088.

engineering

SKILLED FABRICATOR /WELDER permanent position.Tipton area. Call 0121 520 4960

full time - general

SALES ADMINISTRATOR Responsible for order processing, dealing with customers. You must have experience using Excel, Word and Outlook. Sage 200 would be an advantage but not essential.

Send your details by email to sales@jafcotools.com

BRIDGES LOTTERY FUNDED

New Year, New You!

Are you unemployed and 25 or over?

Want to become self-employed in 2017 but not sure how?

Call Amanda at Access to Business today for free advice, support and workshops on 01902 572 397

Email: Amanda@access2business.co.uk

This project is supported by The European Social Fund and the Big Lottery Fund

Wednesbury

Due to continued expansion, we are now recruiting for experienced

Mechanical Maintenance Technician

to join our existing team.

The ideal candidate will have the following;

- Educated to HNC level standard or equivalent time served work experience
- Previous engineering/machinery knowledge/experience
- Familiarity with automated machinery
- Computer systems experienced - knowledge, analyse & control of.

In return, we offer an above industry salary package (up to £40k DOE), excellent working conditions & opportunity to grow & develop within one of the leaders in Manufacturing in the Midlands.

Contact 01902 319333 or email a current CV and a covering letter to jobs@staremploymentservices.co.uk

RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY

careview

Tuesday 17th January 2017

CARERS & SUPPORT WORKERS NEEDED IN SANDWELL EXPERIENCED WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX NEEDS

Park Inn, M5 Jct1, Birmingham Rd, West Bromwich B70 6RS

Tuesday 17th January 2017, from 10am - 19.00pm

Good Hourly Rates - Depending on experience

Drivers preferred but not essential

Contact: 0121 272 5727

CAREVIEW SERVICES IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd

SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd, Wednesbury require

SCAFFOLDERS, SCAFFOLDING TRAINEES & LABOURERS

Training will be provided.

You must be over 18.

Please Tel: Joe on 07918 742851.

Email craig@sbbs-site.co.uk

Warehouse Assistant

required by leading fastener company, duties include picking and packing orders, experience preferred but we are prepared to train suitable applicant with aptitude for figures.

Apply in writing

to Non Standard Socket Screw Limited, 360 Farm Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B19 2TZ

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY JOBSDAY

jobs.expressandstar.com REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

nursing & carers

RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY Tuesday 17th January 2017. 10am - 7pm. Park Inn, M5 Jct1, Birmingham Rd, West Bromwich B70 6RS. Contact: 0121 272 5727 Careview Services Ltd

office & secretarial

EXPERIENCED ADMIN CO-ORDINATOR

required

Full Time, Hours negotiable

Position includes general office duties: typing, filing etc. IT skills are essential

Communication and organisational skills required.

Apply with CV to:

admin@sandwellparkgolfclub.co.uk

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

BARGAIN

BLACK CORSA

1.2, 3 dr, 5 seats, recent MoT due end 2017, lady owner, 80,000 miles, Aux/CD player. Sold as seen.

£1,800 ono

07890 387533.

cars under £1500

DAEWOO MATIZ

2001, 56,000 miles, Bronze, electric windows, air bag, MoT June 2017, central locking, CD, 0.8L, Cheap Insurance.

£300 ono

07454 238 537

GOOD RUNNER

FORD FOCUS LX

2006, petrol, 73,000 miles, one owner from new, MoT February, new cambelt and recently serviced, good runner.

£850 ono

SOLD.

JAGUAR X-TYPE 2.2

59,200 miles, 2002(52), one owner, excellent condition, main dealer FSH, MoT to Oct 2017, quartz grey.

£1,400 ono.

07950 124446.

MG TF

56 plate, 99,730 miles, blue, electric windows, air bag, alarm, MoT, long MoT, central locking, pas, tax, alloys, stereo, CD, leather interior

£1,195 ono

07538 535096.

PEUGEOT 207 SW ESTATE

60 plate, 11 months MoT, less than 30,000 miles, fsh, good condition.

£3,495 o.n.o.

07985 285335.

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

commercial vehicles

CITROEN RELAY

SWB, Enterprise, 2011, 11 Reg, 1 owner from new, silver, reversing sensors, AC, light use only, MoT till May 2017, 121,000 miles from new, service history. **£4,800 ono.**

07737 430083.

driving tuition

Homer's

10 Hours £125! Four Hours £40! 2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered

ADI/PDI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10

07432 458100 / 01562 870050

01384 234954 / 0121 5640090

01902 580065 www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT

Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available

0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

CO-OPERATIVE AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETIES ACT 2014

Notice of Cancellation pursuant to section 5 of the Act

Notice is hereby given that the Authority has pursuant to the above mentioned section this day cancelled the registration of **Bearwood Pantry Limited** (Register No. **32437R**) the registered office of which is at **92 Rathbone Road Bearwood Smethwick B67 5JF** at its request.

The society ceases to enjoy the privileges of a registered society, but without prejudice to any liability incurred by the society, which may be enforced against it as if such cancellation had not taken place.

Date: **16 December 2016**

10 Personals

personal

FEMALE, 70 PLUS YEARS

Happy, youthful, GSOH, seeking male to accompany lady, to share dining out, occasional day activities, possible dancing, theatre, n/s necessary, believes in mutual respect, honesty and sincerity. Cannock and surrounding area.

Photo please (returned)

Box Number P20650 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

general

GOOD PAY FOR MODELS

For Amateur photographic work.

07759 804772.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Economy

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/16/60078	Mr Martin Carrington	Former Perrott Arms 2 Birmingham Road Oldbury B69 4ED	Demolition of existing buildings and proposed construction of 22 No. 2 bed apartments with associated parking and access and boundary treatment (revised application – DC/16/59355).

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

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New Kia Stinger GT aimed at former Saab customers

The Stinger features Kia's signature 'tiger nose'

By Antony Martyn

Kia has revealed its most powerful sports saloon car ever – the Stinger GT – a car it believes will offer former Saab buyers the chance to be different again.

The five-seat fastback sports saloon – unveiled at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit – will arrive in the UK with a twin turbocharged 3.3-litre V6 engine, producing 365bhp.

Kia says the car will crack 60mph in around five seconds, have a top speed of 167mph and feature an eight speed gearbox and rear-wheel drive when it goes on sale here in October.

But the manufacturer says it isn't targeting the obvious rivals from BMW, Audi or Mercedes – instead it believes the Stinger GT will be the sort of car former Saab buyers might buy.

A spokesman said: "This is a car for buyers who want something different – the anti-German brigade who used to buy Saabs. Doctors, accountants, architects, those people who want individual styling, a larger car and value for money."

Saab stopped selling cars when it went bankrupt in 2011. It was bought by a Chinese-Swedish investment group in 2012 which promised to restart production, but that hasn't happened. It traditionally sold in low volumes to buyers looking for an alternative to the mainstream offerings.

The car has four oval exhaust pipes

Kia doesn't expect to sell huge volumes of the Stinger GT in the UK either – the spokesman said 1,500-2,000 a year would be a huge success. "America will be the largest market for this car," added the spokesman.

The Stinger GT is a direct evolution of the concept car that first debuted at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 2011, penned by Kia chief design officer Peter Schreyer.

Featuring four oval exhaust pipes, wheel arch gills, an integrated rear diffuser, LED headlamps and Kia's signature 'tiger nose', the Stinger GT certainly has those sporty looks. And with former BMW man Albert Biermann behind the chassis, which has been honed on the Nurburgring, performance is at its core.

He said: "I think, for the Kia brand, the Stinger is like a special event because nobody expects such a car, not just the way it looks but also the way it drives. It's a wholly different animal."

A 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine will also be available in the Stinger GT, producing 255bhp. However, this is not coming to the UK – well, not just yet anyway.

"The Stinger GT is a car for performance saloon enthusiasts who might have bought one from the likes of Ford or Vauxhall in the past but were put off by the fact they were produced by manufacturers selling 350,000 cars a year," added a spokesman. "This is will be imposing, more individual, luxurious and exclusive."

It is a direct evolution of a concept car

Scout has a distinctive off-road look and innovative all-wheel drive

All-rounder gets new technology

The comprehensive revision of the Škoda Octavia family continues. Now, after the hatchback, estate and the fastest model variant – the Škoda Octavia vRS, comes the most versatile member of the family with innovations in technology and equipment.

The upgraded Škoda Octavia Scout launches with two engine variants and state-of-the-art all-wheel-drive technology with electronically controlled, hydraulic multi-plate clutch. With a ground clearance that has been increased by 30 mm in comparison to the Škoda Octavia estate, the compact five-door also masters rough terrain. Beyond that, it impresses with good climbing capability, a high towing capacity and numerous 'Simply Clever' features from Škoda.

The robust all-rounder impresses with a distinctive off-road look, innovative all-wheel drive, the best driving characteristics and increased versatility both on and off the road. The comprehensively reworked Scout bears the same front as the newest generation of Škoda Octavias and thereby underlines the family resemblance: it features a more prominent bonnet, the new front end with wide radiator grille and additional headlights with a crystalline look, full-LED headlights with adaptive front headlights. Also the modified fog lights and tail lights are equipped with LED technology. Its independent character is recognisable by silver-coloured underbody protection at the front and the rear. The Rough-Road package is also part of standard equipment and features covering for the undercarriage , brake and fuel lines.

The Scout has good boot capacity

The Scout impresses with its interior space, which for the compact car segment is particularly generous, good body layout, distinct versatility, high level of functionality and great driving characteristics. Besides the increased ground clearance, the all-wheel drive with electronically controlled, hydraulic multi-plate clutch, which comes as standard, also ensures even greater driving pleasure off the road. When driving on rough terrain the advantages of the ramp angles, which have been increased to 16.6 degrees at the front and 14.5 degrees at the rear, become apparent.

Both the front and rear axle of the car are fitted with an electronic differential lock (EDL) as standard. EDL allows the car to pull away smoothly on difficult surfaces, transmitting drive to both the front and rear axles.

For safer and easier descents on rough terrain the off-road function is available for the Scout. When in use the speed of the vehicle is consistently maintained without the driver needing to do anything. Modern engine management, which increases safety during descents using braking, makes life easier.

The 'Simply Clever' features include a heated steering wheel and seats with the Thermo-Flux function which, from time to time, increases the air and moisture permeability and provides considerably more riding comfort in different climatic conditions – the upgraded Scout is therefore an adventurer in the truest sense. The boot has a capacity of 610 to 1740 litres and thanks to its width of 1010 mm, is also perfectly suited to transporting bulky loads without any problems. Numerous storage solutions in the interior increase practicality. Towing capacity is up to two tonnes, depending on the engine.

The reworked adventurer is available from market launch with two different four-cylinder engine variants:

2.0 TDI: 110 kW (150 PS), top speed 129 mph, 0 – 62 mph in 9.1 seconds, combined consumption 56.5 mpg, CO2 130 g/km

2.0 TDI: 135 kW (184 PS), top speed 136 mph, 0 – 62 mph in 7.8 seconds, combined consumption 55.4 mpg, CO2 133 g/km.

The current car is equipped with all the modern infotainment systems of the new Škoda generation. All of the capacitive touch displays feature a glass design. The wide range of driver assistance systems in the Scout sets new standards within its segment. Innovations here include Trailer Assist, Blind Spot Detect and Rear Traffic Alert. The Crew Protect Assist function, which closes windows and the sunroof in the event of an impending accident and tensions the seat belts on the front seats, is connected to the improved Front Assist function.

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Wolverhampton & Bilston AC's Psalm Roberts-Nash and Ellis Greatrex

Snooker champion Reanne Evans

Priory Park Boxing Club chairman Paul Gough with Dudley North MP Ian Austin

Sports stars grow from grassroots

SPORTING FEATURE

NICK ELWELL looks at some of the local sports stars who made the headlines in 2016

TEENAGERS Charlotte Breen and Katy Murmanis began the new year with Georgia on their minds.

The talented Tettenhall and Black Country Volleyball Club players were selected to play for England in their European Under-19 clashes with Georgia and Belarus.

Bilbrook Junior FC had cause for celebration in January after landing a £400,000 windfall from the FA, to be used on a new changing pavilion and improved pitches.

In February, Wednesfield Aces became the first cycle speedway club to receive money from Sport England with £6,000 to help fund coaching courses and new equipment. Meanwhile, East Park Wolves cycle speedway club marked their milestone 10th anniversary.

Wolverhampton and Bilston AC duo Ellis Greatrex and Psalm Roberts-Nash, both 16, claimed first and second in the 400m at both the Welsh Under-20 and senior championships.

Crowned

Sandwell's Kimura Shukokai Portway Karate team had 13 members called up by England for the World Championships in Berlin. In the boxing ring, Merridale BC's Akash Tuqir, 17, was crowned champion at the England Youth Championships in Rotherham.

Halesowen's Laura Barker, 22, became a golden girl in the +70kg category at the British National Pro Jiu Jitsu Championships in London.

In March, 13-year-old Bloxwich jiu jitsu ace Lewis Newman, of Simkin Martial Arts Academy in Walsall, struck gold in the Pan-American Championships in class two of medium heavyweight division at Long Beach, California.

Wodensborough Boxing Club's Lauren Johnson landed the English middleweight title.

Dudley electrician Scott Palmer was called up to represent Great Britain at the European Sprint Duathlon in Germany. Year 10 and 11 girls from Coppice Performing Arts School were crowned national futsal champions.

Cannock's Zac Evans was buzzing after winning the EKF European Welterweight title, defeating Jean Marie Pierak at the Lincoln Fight Factory. April saw the covers come off Springhill Cricket Club's new pavilion, while girl power ruled on a historic night for the Wolverhampton Sunday Football League as four female officials took charge of the Harry Round Cup final for the first time.

Jeweller Aaron Sheldon and auctioneer Ben Gamble with the Wednesbury Charity Cup

Halesowen Athletic Club honoured their most famous runner. A plaque was unveiled in Somers Square while the drive at the Abbey Stadium was named after Jack Price, who ran in the 1908 Olympic marathon in London and led the formation of the club in the 1920s.

Former England rugby captain and RFU chairman Bill Beaumont was guest of honour at a special dinner to commemorate Willenhall Rugby Club's 50th anniversary.

Women's world snooker champion Reanne Evans lifted the Staffs and West Midlands League Individual Championship in May. Wodensborough BC's Benjamin Whittaker, 18, lifted the England Elite middleweight title, days after selection for the England podium squad. Snooker star Mark Allen checked into Bilston's Golden Cue club to help pocket £2,500 for Dudley Mind and the Deanesley Centre at New Cross Hospital.

Stourbridge karate ace Liam Reynolds was crowned an English champion at the age of 10. Meanwhile, 3 Hammers Golf claimed the Critchley Award from the Golf Foundation for its work in encouraging youngsters to take up the sport.

Walking football took centre stage at Molineux, while Wednesbury 11-year-olds Amillia Baker and Kirsty Maull smashed their way to a national table tennis title. Former world champion Ken Doherty was the guest of honour at the Stourbridge Snooker League annual awards night. Penn Cricket Club took the wraps off their new £70,000 clubhouse and £25,000 state-of-the-art net facility.

Legendary football scout Les Green called time on his days of talent spotting at the age of 77.

Another former snooker champion, John Parrott, was guest of honour for the Staffs and West Midlands League awards night. Priory Park Boxing Club's new-look gym was opened in the presence of MP Ian Austin.

Wolverhampton University's Walsall campus was the venue for the Black Country School Games, featuring more than 1,400 youngsters.

Cyril Hockham took to the green at Willenhall Trinity Bowls Club to celebrate his 100th birthday in July.

Fordhouses under-13 cricketers were the pride of Staffordshire, becoming Nat West Club County champions.

The Dudley & Cradley Heath League was forced to blow the final whistle after a 106 years of competition.

Another local football league, the Wolverhampton Combination, admitted defeat in its battle to continue, after 113 years.

Powered

Halesowen Cricket Club landed their first major piece of silverware in 14 years in September, lifting the WCB Canterbury Cup at New Road.

Willenhall Trinity Bowls Club clinched their first-ever Staffordshire club competition, while Burntwood's Last Chance Saloon powered to the Great Britain Tug of War Federation Championship.

Landywood player Jack Harris potted his way to victory over snooker legend Jimmy White in a charity exhibition at Bilston's Golden Cue for the Paul Hunter Foundation.

In October, former New Zealand cricketer Jeremy Coney was the guest of honour as Netherton Cricket Club rounded off their 150th anniversary year with a dinner at Dudley's Village Hotel.

Aldridge cricketer Robert Steadman, a 16-year-old all-rounder, was named Young Volunteer of The Year at the NatWest Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards at Lord's.

In November. Burntwood racer Lloyd Shelley defended his Formula 600 title and winning the Sound of Thunder Class, while Kamila Czartolomna's powerboating success reaped reward for South Staffs SC in December.

Wood Green Athletic were celebrating a £1,000 windfall thanks to the sale of te 136-year-old Wednesbury Cup at auction. Willenhall Rugby Club stalwart Elfyn Pugh was honoured with a lifetime achievement award by the RFU.

John Cheetham, Ian Bonser, Rob Bluck, Harrison Worley and Will Dunn, of 3 Hammers golf complex

Officials Lucy Berridge, Zoe Barch, Lisa-Maria Lane and Emily Aldridge line up for the Harry Round Cup Final

Sport

Taking look back at 2016's grassroots achievements
Page 47

Rider Ayres his thanks at response

NEW Cradley rider Danny Ayres says he has been overwhelmed by the welcome he has had from fans since joining the club last month.

Ayres will meet supporters for the first time when he appears on stage at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, February 3 with a bumper turnout expected.

It promises to be an entertaining evening as the 29-year-old talks about his life and career.

He has made the switch to the Heathens from Kent – and he already has a big fan base in the West Midlands after wooing crowds during guest appearances for the club.

Said Ayres: "I've been over the moon with the reaction from the Cradley fans. The support I've got has been great, and there couldn't really have been a better response since it's been announced."

Meanwhile, Ayres has revealed he is ahead of schedule in his recovery from shoulder surgery at the beginning of December.

He stated: "My recovery couldn't have gone any better so far. From the second I got out of surgery, I could instantly feel my shoulder was much more solid.

"The surgeon said the shoulder hadn't been set in the correct position, but he obviously put that right and put in a couple of screws to hold it together.

"I've probably got a couple more weeks of gentle exercises to do, then we can start to push on with some intense physio before the season starts."

The 'Danny Ayres Show' – hosted by broadcaster Nigel Pearson – starts at 7.30 and admission is £5 on the door. The club will announce details of their meet the team night at the event.

Hope for Warley as Hornets are stung

Warley Women 20 Telford Hornets 12

WARLEY opened their account in the first game of the new year, with Hope Southall touching down first.

Telford replied with a converted try, but in the last play of the first half, Jooles Slater scored Warley's second, unconverted.

Slater doubled her tally in the second half and scrum half Emma Thornton completed Warley's tally. None of Warley's tries were converted.

A depleted Telford side were loaned a player by Warley towards the end, and the visitors forced a second try to close the game.

Warley women train every Wednesday from 6.30-8pm.

'Yozza' through to second round tie

TIPTON'S Jamie Hughes comprehensively made it through to the second round of the BDO World Championship as he saw off Martin Atkins at Lakeside.

The 30-year-old fourth seed dropped a set after striking first blood early on but peeled away to secure his passage through on Sunday night.

He will now take on Jim Williams, who whitewashed Tony O'Shea 3-0.

Little belters pass with flying colours

Callum, Abbie-Jane and Ruman

Martial arts

GOLD and black have become the main colours in a small corner of West Bromwich thanks to the success of students from the Moose Martial Arts Academy.

Abbie-Jane Mansell led the way for the Woodward Street academy with a gold rush for England in the European Championships in Belgium.

The 14-year-old Sandwell Academy pupil claimed gold in the individual Kata, pair Kata and team Kata. Meanwhile, there was black belt success sfor Callum Myatt, 15, who attends George Salter Academy, and 11-year-old Phoenix School pupil Ruman Rai. Both passed their 1st Dan with flying colours.

The trio also train with the Wadokai England squad at their base in Walsall, along with clubmates Jacob Wheaton, aged eight, and 11-year-old Nathan Buensalido.

The hat-trick of achievements has delighted chief instructor Shannon Parsons, who has represented Great Britain and has run the academy for six years.

She said: "All three are set to start training for their 2nd Dan black belt over the next two years and will be looking at selection for the 2017 European Championships in Sardinia."

Mansell will aim to defend her European titles next year.

To join Moose Martial Arts Academy call Shannon on 07528 712 692.

NO COMFORT IN CUP DEFEAT

Albion 1 Derby County 2

ALBION have played worse this season and won. They have certainly created fewer chances and won.

Tony Pulis's side had 23 shots, 15 corners, and spent a lot of the game camped in Derby's half.

They dominated the first half and were cruising towards the fourth round until two moments of brilliance from Darren Bent and Tom Ince in the space of three minutes – and two moments of hesitation from Boaz Myhill.

Those errors from Myhill stand out because it was the only change Tony Pulis – who promised to play a strong team – didn't need to make, *writes Matt Wilson*.

Jonny Evans and Chris Brunt were injured, Allan Nyom was unavailable without any written confirmation he could play from the Cameroon FA, and Nacer Chadli was dropped on form.

Myhill was superb for the Baggies when Ben Foster was out with his long-term knee injury, but he was rusty on Saturday, failing to react quickly enough for either goal, kicking waywardly and getting his positioning wrong for Ince's free-kick. Pulis should have picked Foster.

But Albion also should have been home and hosed by the time Bent equalised.

Weakness

Salomon Rondon nearly scored in the third minute, but Derby didn't learn their lesson and continued to try to play out from the back.

Sensing a weakness, the Baggies flooded forward, and it was that pressing which led to Matt Phillips's goal.

After that, Albion were wasteful, guilty of resting on their laurels, before Derby turned the tie on its head in the space of three minutes.

It knocked the stuffing out of the Premier League side, who never recovered and have now been dumped out of the last three cup competitions by lower-league opposition.

In the past four years Wigan, Hull, Aston Villa, and Crystal Palace have all reached the FA Cup final, and this year was the perfect chance for Albion to do the same. The Baggies may be going well in the league. But that will be of little comfort to those with dreams of silverware.

Salomon Rondon is Shackell-ed by former Wolves defender Jason during the cup clash at the Hawthorns

Josh stokes fire at Banks's battleground

ERROL Johnson's Black Country Boxing returns to Walsall next month with a four-fight Boxing Dinner Show at the Banks's Stadium.

'Battleground' features a quartet of undefeated boxers on the February 17 card.

Hot Halesowen prospect 'Dangerous' Lennox Clarke is in action as he looks to secure a title shot in 2017. The 25 year-old is unbeaten in 14 professional contests and has set his sights on a showdown with English Super Middleweight Champion Jahmaine Smyle.

West Bromwich light heavyweight prospect Joshua Stokes completes the card. The brother of undefeated middleweight prospect Tom, he will make his professional debut after a solid amateur career with Wodensborough ABC.

Standard tickets for 'Battleground', priced at £35, are available by calling any of the boxers, while £60 VIP tickets for tables of 10, with two-course meal, are available by calling Walsall FC on 01922 651414/416.

Castle left in ruins after big home win

Wednesbury 76 Bishops Castle 0

WEDNESBURY were awarded a league win as a walkover as opponents Bishop Castle were unable to field a full squad.

But, credit to Bishops Castle, they agreed to still travel and play the game as a friendly. They turned up with only 12 players so Wednesbury loaned them three.

But the hosts made easy work of it. The game had a bad start for both sides with the wet conditions leading to a number of dropped balls and knock-ons from both sides.

However the home side soon settled down and handled the conditions better than their opponents. The first try came early on as Lee Allwood picked the ball up from the back of the ruck and drove over, Dan Till added the conversion.

This boosted Wednesbury's confidence and in the remainder of the half scored a further three tries, two from Jordan Allwood and one from Dan Blake. Till added two conversions.

Wednesbury stepped up their game in the second half as tiredness took its toll on the visitors. Highlights included a spectacular solo try from Ben Baker and a joint effort from Lee and Jordan Allwood scoring another great try. In all, Wednesbury ran in further tries from Baker, Blake, Jamie Becket, Matt Dale, Lee and Jordan Allwood and Kevin Ferris. Till converted five of them.

With no league game this weekend Wednesbury are trying to arrange another friendly.

Wednesbury 2nds travelled to Aston Old Edwardians 2nds and came out on top 56-0. Tries came from Jack Harris and Olly Beard (2) and one each for Neil Sherwood, Brett Hooper, Adam Naylor, Simon Wallace and Nik Luziac. Gary Morgan added five conversions.

Delight as student signs for Mariners

THE sports team at Sandwell College say they are delighted by Grimsby Town's signing of 18-year-old student Ahkeem Rose.

The pacy striker has joined the League Two outfit on an 18-month contract after impressing while on trial. Rose is working under the Mariners' academy boss Neil Woods, having been coached by him before in Walsall's youth set-up.

Joshua Graves, a sports studies lecturer at the college, said: "We are so proud of what Ahkeem has achieved.

"As staff we look forward to seeing his career take off because he deserves the opportunity."

★★★

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